

THE THIRD CHRISTMAS REPORTING AND NUMBER OF THE ILLUSTRATED DRAMATIC NEWS FOR AULD LANG SYNE

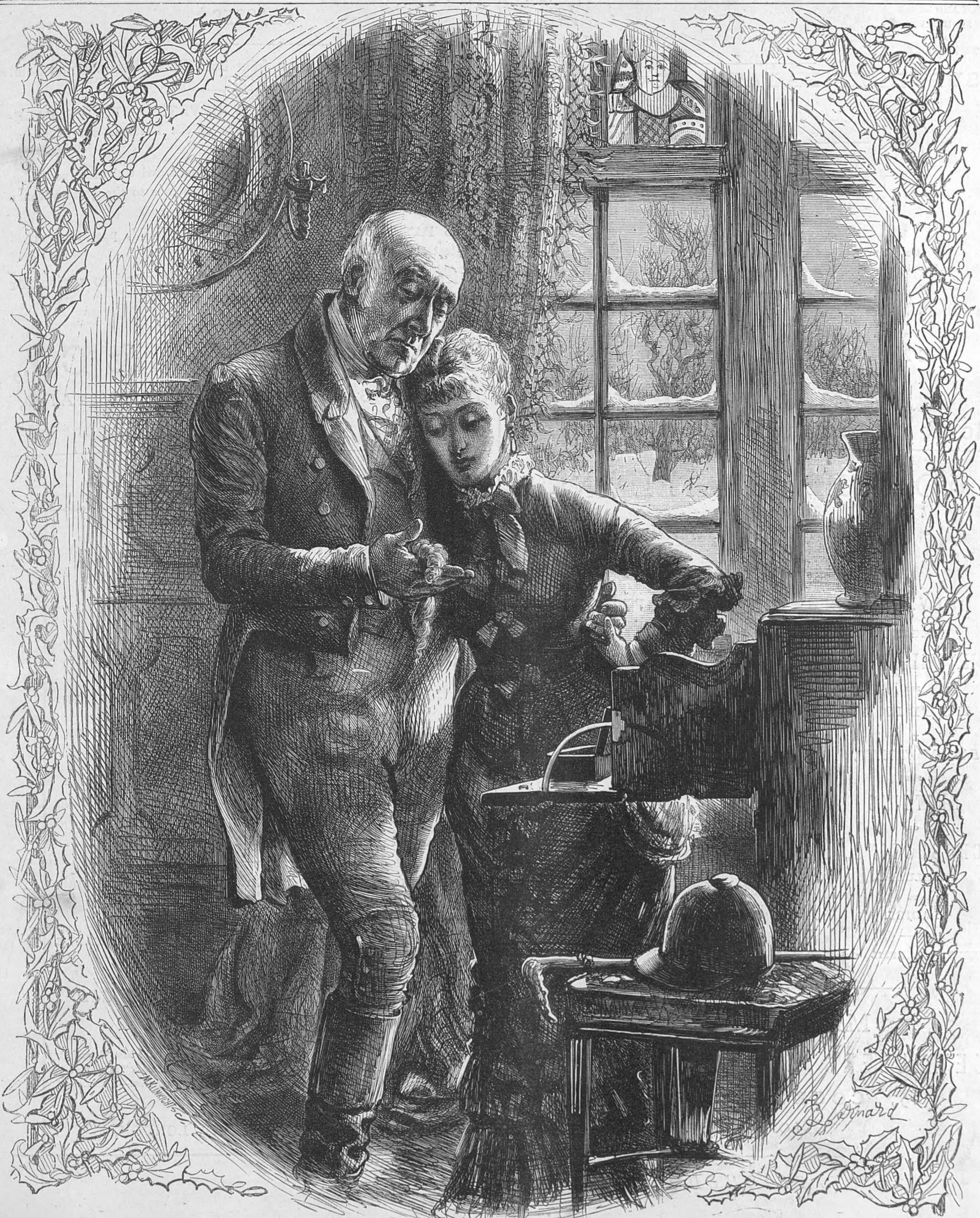
Nos. 148 & 149.—VOL. VI.

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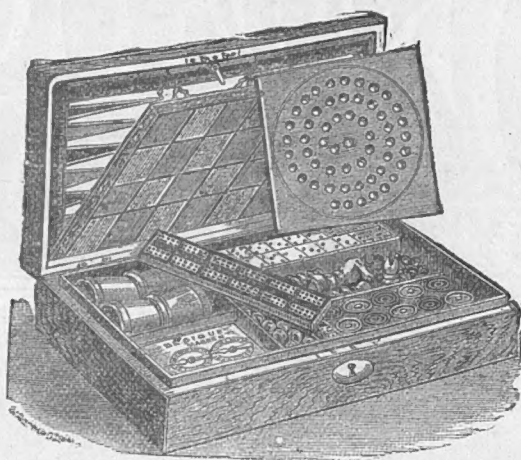


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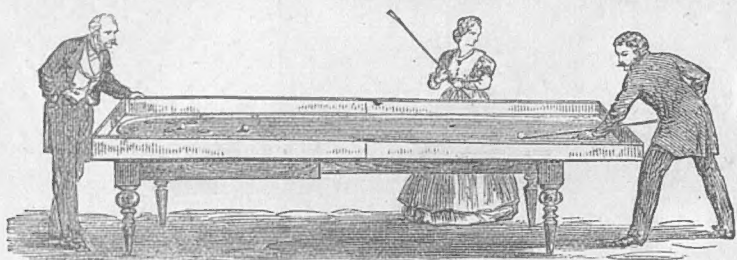
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groundless, and the alleged "emphatic opinion of the Lancet" in support of
this pretension is an incomplete and misleading quotation.—See Lancet,
Nov. 13, 1875.

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THE ILLUSTRATED Sporting and Dramatic News.

LONDON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1876.

AULD LANG SYNE.

A WINTRY gleam from yon declining round
That mocks the moonlight in its pallid glow,
Steals o'er the world in frosty fetters bound,
And ribbed with silent snow;

Breaking the pinewood's melancholy gloom,
Gilding the clustered shafts of chimney range
With fitful touch, and lighting room by room
The windows of the Grange;

Whose deepset panes, fantastically framed
In square or oval, rose or lattice wise,
Return the passing smile, like love ashamed
To lift unwilling eyes.

Within, through painted oriel dimly cast,
The parting ray on carven cornice falls,
And trophied vanities of ages past
On oak empanelled walls:

Triumphs of painter's brush and potter's wheel,
Mirrors and faded labours of the loom,
And crossed with bow the battle-axe of steel
Adorned that ancient room.

And by the antique cabinet they stand,
With arabesque of carving overlaid,
Her tender palm grasped in his shrunken hand,
The old man and the maid.

The hour—the place—the season, suit they not
The temper of the scene? when Memory lends
To "unconsidered trifles" half forgot
The faces of old friends.

So thinks he, as the rust-encumbered key
Grates in the lock, and open to his eyes
A shrine that none but worshippers may see,
The reliquary lies.

Oh! Sport and Love, twin energies of youth,
These are thy trophies, these thy garish spoils,
Rapt in the dawn of life, ere wrong and ruth
Had stretched insidious toils.

The silk, discoloured in all-glorious strife,
And foremost ever borne in conscious pride,
When never bullfinch frowned too high for life,
Nor ditches yawned too wide.

The scarlet, faded to a meeker hue,
In "moving accident by flood and field,"
When hearts beat high, and chivalrously true
The spirit scorned to yield.

Well-cherished guerdons of the course and chase—
The "Ladies' Challenge Cup," unfilled for years,
Since "presentation speech" of Lady Grace
Was drowned by ringing cheers.

And dearer far than testimonial toy,
The first fruits of that memorable burst,
The brush that graced the prowess of the boy,
From find to finish, first.

How whirled the line from yonder tarnished reel,
When from the dawning far into the day,
Fought for his life 'gainst well-tempered steel
The silver lord of Spey.

The Derby lists of fifty years ago,
When Middleton and Mameluke were names
Of more than mere tradition, in the glow
Of old Olympian games.

Tokens of prowess on the shaven lawn,
Lists of the slain in covert and in field;
And all the trophies from enjoyment drawn,
That Pastime's self can yield.

A softer tale that slender packet tells,
With dainty knot of ribbon deftly tied,
His true love's token—ere the marriage bells
Hailed her, another's bride.

What is it winds in glossy coils around
His hand, so beautifully soft and fair,
With that one band of faded azure bound?
"Only a woman's hair."

Aye—drown the sigh, repress the bursting heart,
Assume the stern philosophy of age,
Love claims at last her tributary part,
And melts the stolid sage.

Stands she not by, his one consoling grace,
Fair haven of a lifetime tempest tost,
Moulded alike in feature and in face
To that loved image lost?

Trinkets and trifles, flowerets sere and pale,
Gages of gloves from tiny finger torn,
What are ye, weighed in Love's unerring scale,
To this one lock forlorn?

Thus, as the ghosts upraised by Memory's art
Fade slowly into unsubstantial air;
And, reft of all its phantasies, the heart
Lies cold once more, and bare;

As fondly folded one by one to rest,
The relics rude disturbing hands defy,
And clasps are tightened on the ponderous chest,
Wherein those treasures lie;

What wonder down the furrowed cheek of age
Tear courses tear in sympathetic haste?
And kindlier touches of embrace engage
The maiden's slender waist?

What wonder that a sigh thro' quivering lips
Breaks, for the light of other days divine?
Then cherished most in parting life's eclipse—
The days of "auld lang syne."

AMPHION.

THE WEIRD WOODLAND.

AN ARTIST'S ADVENTURE.

By W. W. FENN.

THE outskirts of a wild, wind-worn copse, high up upon an open down, at the head of a thickly wooded glen near the sea; a copse of stunted oaks, bleached, gnarled, and twisted into a thousand fantastic shapes by the seldom-ceasing blasts from the south-west, the sombre masses of the denser trees bringing into strong relief the fringe of barer boughs and stems, help to give them a ghostly, weird, skeleton-like effect, which is not a little added to when the wind, rushing through the branches, sighs and moans in doleful cadence, or, in an access of violence, reaches to a wild wail; one can fancy the withered trunks themselves at such times endowed with life, and in their abortive attempts to put forth their natural growth, crying out in the torments which the gales inflict, screaming and struggling like mad, frantic fiends, for help which never comes. All cowering in one direction, deformed by the constant pressure, with no elasticity left to sway and bend with the blast, they sometimes give the idea of aged, hobbling dwarfs, whilst the bunches of short, stubby boughs, with the gnarls or boles out of which they grow suggest in places the heads and faces of these suffering phantoms of the forest, and, seen under a grey evening light, look like goblins and gnomes, with hair erect bristling with terror.

There is no limit to what the imagination may conjure up out of this rugged fringe of weather-beaten trees. And, as the eye towards nightfall, when a wild wind is blowing, wanders from it down the glen on the right to where its mouth reveals a great expanse of ocean, it must be a dull soul that is not impressed with the weird romance of the spot. Some low underwood, brambles, furze, and fern, and long, dank grass, crouching at the foot of the copse, merge gradually into the soft turf of the down, and with a bit of broken bank and narrow, winding sheep-path, make up the foreground.

This was the scene I had long determined to paint, and that I might make studies for it, I betook me, late last October, to an adjacent fishing-town.

On the morning after my arrival, I bent my steps towards the copse. I took the way by the edge of the cliffs, intending to skirt the side of the glen where it ran up from the sea to my position. The weather was beautifully fine, the air soft and quiet, the very reverse of what my subject required, but it would serve to make the preliminary notes and drawings in better than rougher, and so late in the year it was not likely I should have to wait long for a change; indeed, the glass was falling, and a shift of wind within twelve hours was prognosticated by an old fisherman with whom I exchanged a word or two soon after starting.

He was sitting half-way up the steps leading from the town to the cliffs watching the coastguard boat, which was coming round from the next station, lying about two miles to the eastward. She was some little distance out, for the tide was low and the shore rocky, still we could see that the four blue jackets were pulling lustily, and that there was something lying huddled in a heap under a piece of tarpaulin in the stern. As the little craft drew closer, apparently with the intention of making for the nearest bit of landing beach in front of the town, we observed that her cargo, whatever it was, interested the coxswain greatly, he would constantly bend over it, as if examining it curiously.

"What have they got aboard there, think you?" said I, to the fisherman.

"Well, I can't rightly make out," he answered, shading his eyes with his hand; "my sight be's so proper bad, it be'ant no good asking me nowadays; can't you make it out?"

I could not either, for when the boat touched the shore a crowd of beach folks gathered round her, and she was so hidden by them and the fishing craft hauled up thereabouts that it became impossible to distinguish exactly what was going on. The burden was landed, and was carried up among the tarred sheds and houses out of sight, followed by the eager crowd. After a little more speculation with the fisherman, I bade him good day, and mounting to the top of the cliffs, pursued my way.

There is scarcely a more lovely piece of shore on the south coast than that immediately in the neighbourhood of the opening to the glen. It is shut in on either hand by tall, crumbling, yellow cliffs, and forms a sequestered little bay, and save for the coastguard station already referred to, quite out of sight, there is no habitation within two miles. The beauty of the day, and the scene, together with my walk and its purpose, soon drove all further wonderings about the boat out of my mind.

With such weather as then prevailed, a pleasanter place, in spite of its solitude, to sit and paint in could hardly have been found, than the fringe of this copse. So, being free from all interruptions, I was as happy as artist could be when I sat down under the shelter of some tall furze, and began my preliminary drawing.

The effect, as I have said, was all wrong, but by three o'clock in the afternoon there was an inking of the tone and feeling I wanted. The fisherman's prophecy was soon realised; the gentle air from the east died away, and was followed by occasional puffs from the opposite quarter, very slight at first, but getting stronger with each succeeding one, until the puffs became gusts, and the gusts lapsed into a continuous and ever-increasing breeze. A film, too, of watery haze overspread the sky, becoming in its turn thicker and thicker until it grew from a rifted mackerel cirrus high up into low dense banks of ominous rain cloud. These shortly began throwing out little skirmishing drops, which fell with a patter on my white umbrella, and by half-past four had

settled into a persistent downpour, sufficient, with the gathering darkness to drive me homewards. This rain promised to last, and it performed its promise so consistently that for the two following days I was a prisoner in my lodgings.

The glimpse of the stormy effect which the latter part of my first day's work out of doors had afforded me, was very useful, and I managed to knock a good deal of it in on my canvas from memory, and when the rain had ceased on the third morning, leaving nothing but the wrecks of the storm clouds hurrying across the sky before the unabated wind, my picture was just in a fit condition to go on with on the spot.

The weather now was all that the subject required: wild, gloomy, menacing, with occasional rifts of silvery light bursting through the leaden clouds, and lighting up alternately in brilliant patches the sea, cliffs, and woods. Ensnared under the shelter of the friendly gorse bushes, I worked away diligently for hours; growing more and more inspired with the theme, as towards the afternoon the effects became better and better. Now, indeed, it was that one could realise the weird character of the scene, and that the whistling winds, doing their part most efficiently, called into existence that ghost-like life amongst the bare and stunted trees which had so much impressed me.

Anything more solitary and awful than the place now appeared it had never been my fate to experience, and as the gloaming increased and the lurid tones of a fierce, but abortive, sunset overspread the sky and copse, I wrought myself up to a pitch of absorbed enthusiasm with my work that ought, if one's powers were only commensurate with one's feelings, to have led to a successful issue. In my imagination I beheld the spectral trees endowed with life; I saw all in them and more than I have endeavoured to suggest in my opening words. The ghostly rank of mad struggling skeletons, with crouching or upturned faces and knotted arms lifted to the heavens imploringly; the gnome or dwarf-like shape of some of the trees, intermingling with the gaunt, thin shapes of others, and the perpetual howling, shrieking, and screaming of the hurricane which seemed to endow them all with voices, produced in me a frenzy of excitement never known to me before. I cannot convey with my pen a tithe of what I felt; it was something quite supernatural—quite terrible. Ah! if I could have put this sort of sentiment on to my canvas I should regret the poverty of my pen the less.

I am yet more and more absorbed in my work. The groaning, shrieking trees are more alive than ever; I hear their mad moanings, and pleadings for a surcease of the wind, which wrenches their every joint. I fancy I see the tall, weird things stalking from their places and interchanging positions as the merciless hurricane sweeps by.

At last, whilst looking up, I am suddenly convinced I do behold one of the shorter spectre stems come forth from amidst its fellows into the low underwood, furze, and ferns. I believe I do see it through the now thickening, misty light, with a pale, haggard face and wild eyes, stretch its body forward, and, stooping a little towards some of the bushes, raise its arms, and clutch eagerly at the swaying tendrils of the underwood. Then moving round to the other side of a mass of ferns, it disappears, and I start to my feet bewildered and amazed, and doubting whether I am in my right senses.

Am I going mad? Surely I cannot be deceived! I rub my eyes, and stand glaring like an idiot. At length, however, just as I am making a strong effort to shake off what I have decided must be an optical illusion, the result of my over-wrought fancy, the strange, phantom-like form re-appears, and then I see that it is a haggard-looking young man, with matted hair, long, pale, beardless face, and fierce eyes. He is without his coat, his shirt sleeves are torn and besmirched, and he is gathering the hips and laws from off the bushes and devouring them eagerly. Presently our eyes meet, and, with a start and a low cry, he rushes back into the thicket like a wild and scared animal.

By this time night was closing in. Every moment increased the gloom and wild solitude. I was too disturbed to think of further work even if there had been enough light left, and bewildered and scared myself, I packed up my traps and made the best of my way homewards.

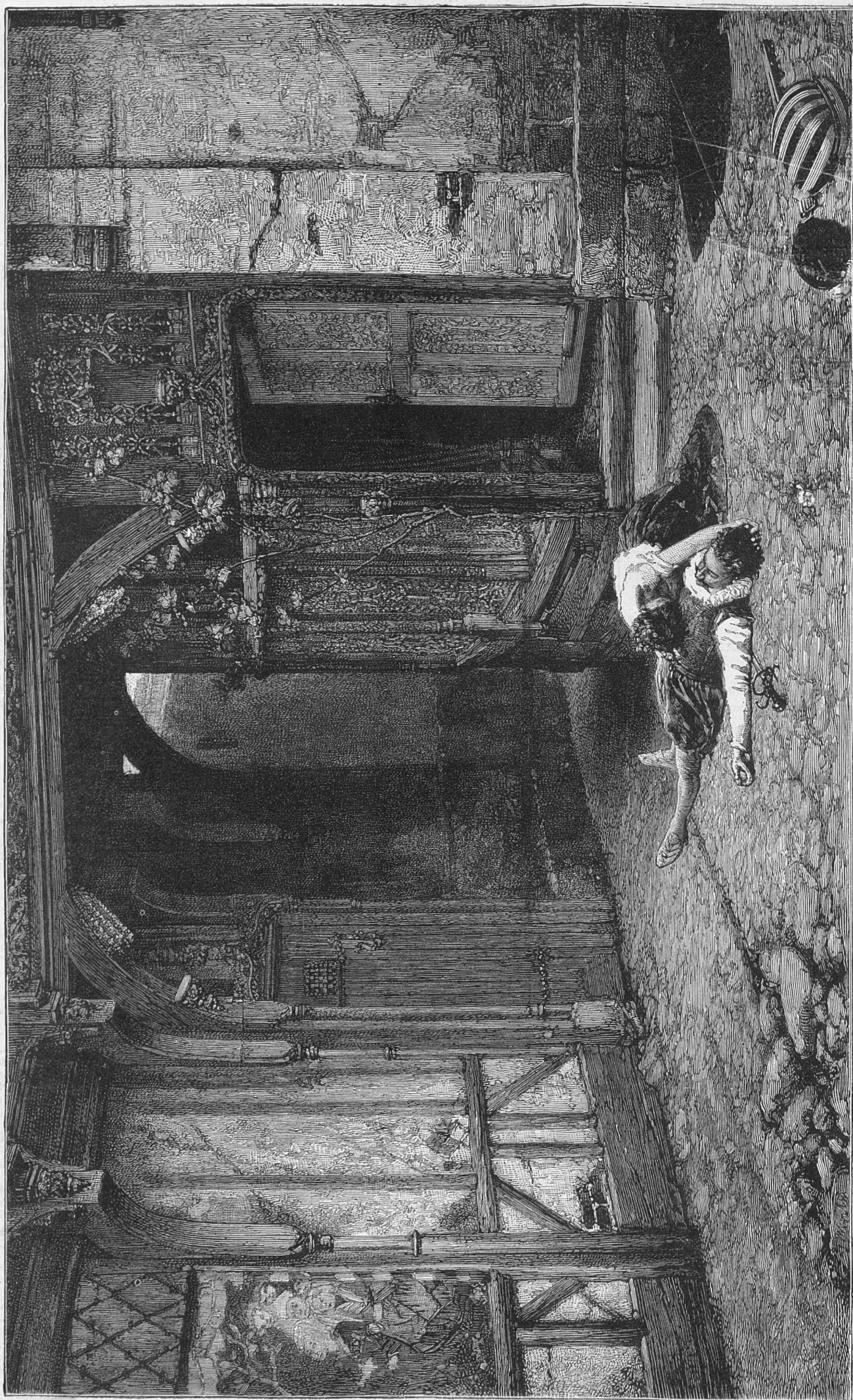
For the next twelve hours I was in a perplexity of strange doubt and uneasiness. I slept but little, and only when the bright morning sun streamed into my room did I feel sufficiently reassured to assume that perhaps, I had been deceived by my imagination, which had been intensely stimulated. Once again then, the next day found me at my post, and as the morning was cheerful and clear, and I was only filling in some mechanical details of the foreground, I was possessed by very different feelings from those of the previous evening. When I did once or twice look around and wonder if I should see anything more of the strange being who had so disturbed me, it was with comparative indifference. But as the afternoon drew on, and with it came a slight renewal of the suitable effect, I found myself involuntarily thinking more about him.

So I determined to divert my mind by breaking off work for ten minutes, and eating the snack of luncheon stored in my haversack. I stood up, therefore, in front of the easel, and whilst munching away, contemplated my picture, but without for some time comparing it with nature.

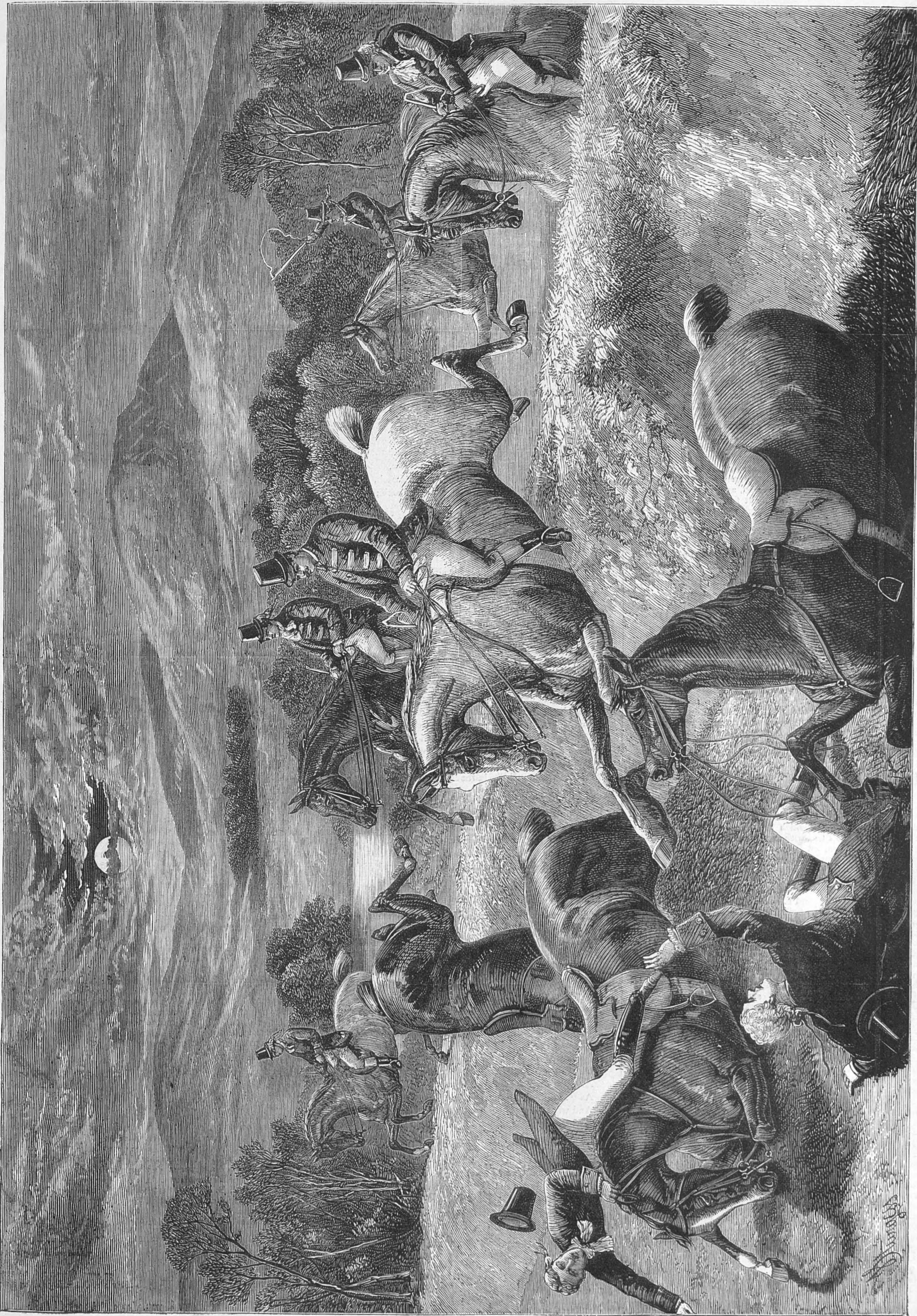
If an idea of the utter solitude of this place has been ever so faintly conveyed, it may perhaps a little excuse my want of courage when I say that my nerve entirely forsook me when, on looking up at last in the direction of the copse, I suddenly saw, standing only three paces off, the figure which had so strangely appeared the evening before! There was no doubt about him this time; no mistaking him for a tree or a ghost now; though in truth he looked pale and uncanny enough for either. I involuntarily stepped back, as I saw him, and I don't doubt that for a moment my face was as pale as his. My heart gave a jump into my throat, so unexpected and appalling was his appearance. A mere lad, and terribly thin, yet tall and very powerfully built, he seemed as if he were going to spring upon me. His lantern-jawed beardless face, disfigured by a freshly-made wound across the right temple, his black eyes, heavy eyebrows, and uncovered head, with dishevelled, matted hair, his tattered, besmirched though once decent suit of grey tweed, gave him an aspect very startling.

Before I had time to recover my wits, he had again come within a yard of me, and with extended arms, said in a low, imploring, husky voice, "Spare me a morsel, I am starving!" and he clutched eagerly at the remaining crust in my hand. Directly he spoke, there was something about him which reassured me, and I gave him the remainder of my scanty meal. Fiercely thrusting it into his mouth, he continued in hurried, broken, accents:—

"I think I may trust you. Perhaps you could help me if you knew how I came to be here. Yes, I will tell you, but not in the open; come into the wood, I am afraid of being seen, of being caught, of being hanged!" and in the most excited manner, he moved towards the thicket, nervously beckoning me to follow. Curiosity, and a pitying interest, succeeded my passing fear and doubt, and I went after him without hesitation. His steps were so rapid, as he pushed blindly through the underwood, that I had great difficulty in keeping up with him; moreover, what with the fading light, and the increasing density of the copse, I almost lost sight of him several times. At length, after going a considerable distance, he stopped at a spot where the autumn-tinted foliage was a little less thick, and where, at the foot of a tree, lay a knapsack and light sort of overcoat.



AFTER THE SONG.—DRAWN BY BEAUMONT.



A MOONLIGHT STEEPLECHASE.—DRAWN BY J. STURGES.

Flinging himself down upon them he said, in the same distracted tone:

"I don't know what to do, or how to act! I had better give myself up, and have done with it, for I shall die if I stop here!" And, without giving me time to speak, he sprang to his feet, put his hands on my shoulder, leaned his head upon them, and burst into tears. Then, he went on in broken sentences: "No, I'll tell you first, and you can give me up, or help me to escape, it won't matter which. I have been hiding in this wood for four days—I think it is four—but I hardly know: I am soaked to the skin, and am faint for want of food."

Feeling for my flask, and putting it to his lips, I said, "Tell me what you have done, and what has driven you to this?" for strange as the whole affair was, I still felt that whatever had happened he was sorely in need of help. The stimulant steadied him a little; he ceased trembling, raised his head, and for a moment looked straight at me, but only for a moment; he seemed unable to meet my gaze, and his face now struck me as being one of the weakest I had ever seen. It was like a sickly infant's, rather than a man's, and the tears still trickling down his wan cheeks added to this effect, and had it not been painful, it would have been ludicrous. I repeated my question, promising to do what I could for him.

"Oh! I have been a fool!" he went on, "if I had only told somebody at first; but now it must look as if I were guilty; but, as God is my judge, I did not mean to do it, and the sight turned my brain."

"Explain what you mean?" I said, beginning for the first time to think that he was, perhaps out of his mind.

"If you will come with me," he said; "I'll show you where it happened, and how it happened, but I dare not go alone; perhaps he has not been found, and may be there still, and I could not bear it!"

I hesitated as he moved in an opposite direction to that by which we had come.

"Ah! you are afraid, and no wonder; but if I tell you more, perhaps you won't be; I will never raise my hand in violence again," he said, returning to where I stood. Then, he covered his face with his hands for a minute, as if trying to collect his thoughts, and again went on, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

"Well, I had got a fortnight's holiday, the first I have ever had, and I walked all the way from London with a knapsack for the fun of the thing, and I took a week to get down here, and four days ago I was on the shore there in the morning, had gone down through this glen that I had heard so much of, and came out on the beach. It was quite early, and I had slept at a roadside inn, and I think he must have seen me and followed me from there, for I was no sooner down by the sea than he came up, as if he also had come through the glen. He began to beg at first, and I gave him a trifle, then he asked for more, and grew insolent, and I turned back to get rid of him."

"Who? who are you speaking of?" I inquired.

"Who?" repeated my strange companion, lowering his voice to a whisper; "Why the man I have murdered! Yes, murdered! for just as I got into the wood again, he sprang upon me, cut my forehead open with a heavy stone, and tried to throttle me, but I was too strong, I threw him off in a moment, and, as I did so, dealt him a blow on the side of the head, and he fell—yes—fell senseless at my feet. Nothing that I could do afterwards seemed of any use, he never moved. Then, when I saw he was dead—there in the footpath—I say, the sight turned my brain, and instead of calling or going for help, I stood looking at him like a fool. The place was so lonely, not a creature about; the wood, and the shore, and the solitude were so strange to me—to me who have been used to nothing but crowded streets all my life. After a long while—I don't know how long—and I could do nothing to restore him, I heard voices approaching, and I thought if I was found with his body there, no one would believe my story; how could I explain it, and prove it to be true? So I dragged him in amongst the trees, up to a place where a low bit of cliff overhangs the beach, and there, at the top, I left him, and in abject terror hid myself here in the most remote part of the wood, for the voices seemed to be following and calling after me. At last they died away, but I dare not move. I feared to show myself, and in my excitement and misery fell exhausted. By and bye it came on to rain and blow, and got dark, and I crouched under this tree and passed the night here; and the whole of the next day it rained, and the whole of the next, and I dared not move. I think I must have been in a kind of stupor the best part of the time, and it seemed to be only hunger which brought me at all to myself. I ate the biscuit or two I had with me, and grew more ravenous after I had swallowed them, yet I could not make my mind up to leave this hiding-place; I could see nothing but him before me, and behind me, and everywhere I turned my head; and the howling of the wind through the trees sounded like voices in pursuit. Somehow at last I knew the sun was shining and setting, there was a red glare before my eyes, and I took my soaked coat off, hoping to dry it, and crept out in the twilight and began eating the berries I saw on the outskirts of the wood. Then too, I saw you for the first time, and I flew back here in greater terror than ever. I thought I was discovered! Once more I must have swooned, for I remember nothing afterwards till it was broad daylight. Starvation drove me again to seek the berries, and when for the second time I saw you, and with food in your hands, hunger overcame every other feeling."

Gasping and shooting out his sentences with the utmost rapidity, I had great difficulty at times in understanding the unfortunate young man, and due only to my subsequent recollection of the whole strange business, is the coherence of this part of my story and his. I really did not take half of it in at the time; however, I was impressed by his words, and the exceeding folly and weakness of which he had been guilty in thus concealing himself. Thus much I comprehended at the time, fully as well as that the baby face and head were gifted with little better than a baby's brains. Made the recipient of his confession, and fully believing it myself, there might nevertheless, be some difficulty in inducing others to do so. The first step, I felt, came what might, would be to make the police acquainted with the circumstances, and that, at once, if I did not wish to be implicated also.

Hurriedly fetching my traps, and returning to him, I insisted on his going with me to the town. He reluctantly consented, and only on the condition that I would first follow him to the spot where he had deposited the body, to see whether it had been found. Rapidly growing dark as it was, I hastened him forward, explaining, as he led the way, the necessity for immediate action, and learning by snatches that the man who had attacked him was an ill-looking tramp, pretending to sell combs; and that he himself, barely seventeen years of age, was a young clerk in a merchant's office in the city with only three more days left, out of his fortnight's leave.

On approaching the mouth of the glen he trembled violently; it was not a pleasant quest. As we emerged from the thicket into the narrow broken path, there was only just sufficient light left for him to point out the spot where he had struck the fatal blow, and to show how he had then dragged the man up through the opposite side of the wood, to the edge of the low cliff. With a beating heart I pushed on through the gloaming, expecting to come upon a horrible sight.

"Here," said my companion; "is where I left him; here, just at the edge." But there was nothing to be seen, and I began half to suspect that the story was the terrible hallucination

of a madman after all, when, I suddenly remembered the coast-guard boat, with its mysterious cargo. Now I fancied I saw the whole affair clearly, for I had had a kind of conviction at the time, that it was a dead body I had seen landed on the beach.

To hurry home by the nearest cut across the cliffs, and to house my companion in my lodgings, whilst I made inquiries, was obviously the next step. An hour-and-a-half later I had been to the police, and to the infirmary, and learned that the coastguardsmen had found the man, probably not long after he had been left for dead, but seeing some signs of life, they manned their boat and took the speediest means of getting him looked to. He had been only severely stunned, and on coming to himself would give no account of what had happened, and departed, once more to tramp through the country, and to commit any further acts of brigandage which opportunity might suggest.

Needless to add, I packed the wretched young cockney off to his home the next day, trusting that he had learned a lesson that would last him for life.

I had two or three more days' work on the skirts of the "Weird Woodland." The picture did not turn out so successfully as it ought, but I never look at the sketches and studies for it in some moods, without recalling the sensations I experienced on first beholding the ghost-like apparition of the young man as he emerged from the trees. They were very startling at the time, and as no power that my brush possesses could ever record them, I have been induced to try if there were sufficient in my pen.

"BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON."

"A MAD frolic indeed!"—be the stable unbarred,
And wild fire of torches illumine the yard;
Let helper and groom be awakened from sleep;
Their sweetest and first, be it never so deep.
Lo! the steed neighs an answer, and turns in his stall,
Like soldier upstarting at clarion's call;
Though wine mantles rosy, and comrades are boon,
We gallop to-night by the light of the moon.

Ho! ravish the sheet from his quarter away,
And hood better fitted for ease than the fray,
See the saddle sits firm, like a rock, on his back,
And loosen his head from the chain of the rack;
Let bridle and bit his equipment complete,
With a pull at his girths, and a glance round his feet;
Then a nimble "leg-up" to the little gossoon,
And he walks in a ring by the light of the moon.

By the fisherman's hut on the shores of the lake,
Our final instructions at starting we take,
And our way to the goal lies up yonder ravine,
Where crashes the waterfall, heard but unseen;
Our finish the ruin, dismantled and grey,
That gleams, like a ghost, on the hill far away;
Our track lies as clear as the highway at noon,
Over torrent and crag, by the light of the moon.

To horse then! away! like a whirlwind we speed,
Careering in desperate race for the lead;
Crag, boulder, and thicket fly fast to our rear,
And wild wood is ringing with laughter and cheer;
There are stumbles, and blunders, and leaps in the dark,
What matter to those who ride out for a lark?
And bright is the twinkle of stirrup and shoon,
Of breastplate and bit, in the light of the moon.

Hurrah! for the voices of hollow and hill,
With hoof's clanging thunder re-echoing still;
The elfin retainers of forest and fen,
Fly scared from their revels in dingle or glen.
The owl and the bat, dark marauders of night,
Sweep downwards with terror, or pause in their flight,
And drowned in the tumult is Philomel's tune
By this frolic at night in the light of the moon.

Oh! fast o'er the moon speed the vapours on high,
O'er fence, field, and fallow still faster we fly;
There is sighing, and sobbing, and foam on the flanks,
And loose running coursers, and gaps in the ranks;
But false the grim warning in prophecy spoken,
No necks ere the birthday of morning are broken,
Though bruisers may grumble, and renegades swoon
At the cropper they came in the light of the moon.

Refulgent on high rides the Queen of the Chase,
The Goddess of Sport, with a smile on her face,
As hard and as straight can her worshippers run,
'Neath her nightly dominion as under the sun;
And she rules as supreme, in her star-ridden span,
As "Hunting," that sways the affections of man:—
And what better change, than to follow in June
December's pursuit, by the light of the moon?

The stag on the mountain in heather reclines,
We seek not his trophy of velvet tines;
The fox, from his raid upon midsummer nest,
Lies curled in his earth unmolested at rest;
The hare from her form no intruder may fright:—
Contented we follow our shadows by night,
By the Lake of Killarney, dear Eileen Aroon,
In madcap array, by the light of the moon.

Such teasers the fences, so fierce is the pace,
That three live alone to the end of the chase,
The chestnut compounding retires from the fray,
And the black's gallant heart at the double gives way,
One rides through the ivy-grown portal at last,
And winds to his comrades a challenging blast;—
Then hurrah for the grey mare, the smart Octoroon,
As they loosen her girths by the light of the moon.

AMPHION.

THE RUN OF THE SEASON:

OR,

THE PHANTOM FOX.

By WAT BRADWOOD

(Author of "O. V. H.," "Ensemble," "A Hunt Cup," &c.)

CHAPTER I.

"CAPTAIN BUMPUS."

RUTSHIRE is a thoroughly arable county; what meadow lands it boasts are, like angels' visits, few and far between. Through the centre of it runs a long backbone of hill, rising some 700 feet above sea-level. The surface of this high ground is arable, but its basis limestone—the soil literally grows stones. You may cart them away by tons to the acre one spring, and when next you plough deep, the furrows will teem with lumps of limestone. This upland is free of timber; it not so long ago was open moor. No hedges are there to be seen. The stones provide ready-made material for wall-building, and stone walls, loosely thrown up, divide field from field. The soil is clay, and of a most tenacious kind. To build a substantial wall by the roadside, all that the farmer does is to pile up flat blocks of stone horizontally, one above the other, to a height of four feet, coping the top with a perpendicular row of the same sort of material, and binding down the lot with a few shovelfuls of mud scraped from the roadside. The low-lying lands on either side of the ridge are thickly wooded, and rank with deep, straggling hedge-rows. It cannot be called a flying country; yet it breeds its own sportsmen, of a business-like stamp, who love a horse or a hound, and who would lynch any man who put up wire in a fence.

Till the last three years, the Rut Hunt had been in the hands of the Brownsmiths, father and son in turn. Brownsmith junior did not hunt the hounds himself; Tom Dane, who had been his father's first whip, handled the pack. Now, Tom had been in his younger days second whip in turn to both Jem Hills, with the Heythrop, and Treadwell, with the Old Berkshire. Under these masters of the art, he had become imbued with a strong theory in favour of rapid casts and frequent and judicious lifting.

The clays of Rutshire are but cold scenting at the best of times. A fox well rattled for the first quarter of an hour is more than half killed. But, on however good terms the hounds may get away with their fox over Rutshire fallows, they are dead certain to throw up their heads in the first ten—and often in the first five—minutes out of cover. What with the coldness of the soil, and frequency of dingle and spinney, a check by that time is inevitable. The fox then gets upon better terms with himself, and if the hounds are left to hunt out the line in old fashion, yard by yard, they may kill their fox dead enough before the end of the day; but the run will be what the Honourable Crasher, in Whyte Melville's immortal "Market Harborough," contemptuously calls "walking after hounds," for some two hours as a minimum.

It has been fully agreed that better sport was never seen than when Tom Dane hunted the hounds. He knew every hedge-row, and could lay you odds upon the line of every fox, from point to point. He never burnt daylight at a check. If the first natural cast of the hounds failed, as they spread of their own accord, he would, except with a tired and dodging fox, at once lift, and gallop to his point. Twenty to one he hit it off, and, by bustling his fox, killed him in one hour, instead of two, and kept his field in warmth and good humour. He has been known to lift at such a pace over ground that he had traversed scores of times before, that on one memorable occasion, having galloped with his hounds at his heels for a mile stretch between Goose Common and Guttlebury Hangers, and there having thrown his hounds into the lower end of the cover, to his disappointment they spread mute. But none the less was he confident. "I'm blessed if we ain't here first," was all he said, and within another thirty seconds the halloo of a ploughboy, 300 yards higher up the valley, announced the arrival of Tom's fox, which he had passed on the way. As it was, Tom gave better gallops, and displayed more masks per season than any master or huntsman before him in Rutshire during the current century.

But, just three years ago, Brownsmith Secundus, who did not follow the steady gait of his father before him in money matters, burnt his fingers badly over Doncaster's Derby. It was but the finishing touch to a long series of disastrous turf speculations. Retrenchment became the order of the day. The girls were growing up; they could be educated better and more cheaply abroad, he said; and, before Michaelmas came round, Brownend Hall had been let furnished upon a five years lease.

The sceptre of Brownsmith passed into the hands of Captain Bumpus, who offered to hunt the hounds three days a week, upon guarantee of a subscription of £800. Bumpus was a man of weight in the county and in the saddle. He announced his intention of hunting the hounds himself. Ten years before, he had gone as hard as any man, and, even to this day, few people see more of a run, though he knows the country by heart—as well as Tom Dane—and therein lies his forte.

Tom Dane did not care to waste his sweetness as kennel huntsman, and has gone down to the grass, to hunt a Midland pack. Many shook their heads when they heard that he was going. If Bumpus had not got the reddest face, the cheeriest laugh, and the best port in the county, it is doubtful whether even his personal popularity would have reconciled those who had tasted the sweets of Dane's lifting process to the loss of that worthy.

Now, Bumpus is a Tory all round. No one in the county would wish him otherwise; everyone votes "blue" in the district. But his Conservatism pervades his entire system—even to his marrow; his doctor says he believes even that commodity has not changed in his bones for the last seven years. Though on the sunny side of fifty, he wears high gills and neckcloth, à la George the Fourth.

In no phase of life is his Conservatism more prominent than in sport. He did not condescend to handle a breechloader till 1867, and then only under protest, and in self-protection, on finding that his friends were shy of asking him to shoot, because of the length of time that he kept the line standing with his muzzle-loading. It is needless to say that he always shoots, when in his own turnips, over a brace of dogs, and considers "walking up" an unsportsmanlike barbarism. He holds implicitly to the maxim of the Rev. W. B. Daniell, that "hounds should never be cast so long as they are inclined to hunt," but ignores the qualifications to this general rule, which the divine, who was ahead of his time in his theories of handling hounds, has appended in his dissertation.

Acting upon this principle, Bumpus, on taking the hounds into his own hands, at once discountenanced the quondam lifting doctrines of Rutshire.

"The chief beauty of foxhunting," he would say, "is to see hounds hunt. Any fool can gallop after a red herring, if he has a mind."

"Hold hard, gentlemen, if you please!" he would halloo, the instant his hounds threw up their heads in a cold fallow; as they spread to their own cast, with a cover looming black on the horizon as the inevitable point, and a ploughboy's halloo ringing in everyone's ears two fields ahead, he would retort with contemptuous good nature to any friend who alluded to the halloo, and who suggested a lift, or even a cast forward, "Do you think

you can catch the fox yourself? If so, pray gallop after him, if not, pray let the hounds hit off the line for themselves."

And no doubt they would, sooner or later; whenever a fox was accounted for, which was not too often, Bumpus would take out his watch and remark with pride, "Two hours and forty minutes from find to finish!" But he wisely abstained from allusions to distance, as the crow flies, for it was usually the case that the fox had been ringing within three miles of his kennel from the first challenge. It will be therefore not a matter of surprise that the Rutshire Hunt seriously thought, at the close of last season, of changing the uniform from pink to Ulsters, and of adopting Father Time with a spent hour-glass, as the device of the button.

CHAPTER II.

"THE RUN OF THE SEASON."

There was, however, one red letter day in the records of last season, a day which stands with all the more prominence in the recent annals of the Rutshire Chase, on account of the shivering, dawdling, and circuitous nature of the so-called runs of ordinary days.

The meet was at Wurzel Grange, the abode of a newly-married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Golightly. In his bachelor days, young Jack Golightly had kept his string at Melton; but, having taken to himself a wife, had, with a sigh of regret, turned his back upon the grass, and came down to rusticate upon his ancestral ploughs. No one viewed with more disfavour than Golightly the tactics of the reigning M.F.H. His feet itched in the stirrups day after day as he saw the hounds tyeing upon imaginary fragments of cold scent, the tail hounds "running dog" from field to field after the leaders, and the resources of human service sternly denied to them.

When he asked Bumpus to meet at the Grange on the last Saturday before Christmas Day, he made an especial request that breakfast should be announced for 9.30, and guaranteed that his home covers should hold a strong fox.

Golightly had a younger brother Dick, who had then just passed his army examination, and was awaiting Her Majesty's recognition of his military genius in the shape of a sub-lieutenancy.

Dick had come down to spend Christmas with his brother, and had listened evening after evening to the laments of his senior upon the newly-revived old fashions of the Rutshire Hunt.

Dick had been educated at Rutborough School, some twelve miles as the crow flies from Wurzel Grange. Two years had passed since he had been emancipated from that establishment, but he still had many friends in the school, and had lately looked up many of his old mates, and cemented old alliances by going over to play football on half-holidays. He had persuaded Sam to invite four of the head boys to the Grange, at the commencement of the holidays, to spend the Sunday then impending before they separated to their respective homes.

"I can't mount them, Dick," said Sam.

"They won't expect it, old fellow," said the latter; "they'll amuse themselves fast enough, and can see any ordinary run of old Bumpus's on Shanks's mare."

"Where shall we draw first," asked the master of the host, as he climbed after breakfast into his saddle at the doorstep of the Grange.

Dick answered promptly for Sam.

"I'm sure a fox harbours in the cover at the bottom there. I found feathers and two ducks nearly killed under some fences only two days ago." And Dick pointed to a small three-cornered cover visible at the far end of the park.

Steadily old Bumpus jogged down the drive, heading for the boundary fence. "Yoicks! in there!" and the hounds in an instant were topping the stake-and-bound.

A fox must have kennelled almost in the angle of the two fences. In less than five seconds there was a chorus; no whimper, then challenge, then duet, to lead up to the full flow of music—but a tremendous outburst from the outset. Bumpus's watch was at once in his hand, and he timed the find to a minute.

From the lower end of the cover ran a thorny hollow for a hundred yards, reaching to the park palings.

In less than two minutes from the find, the hounds had run the line straight through the cover, and had taken it up out of sight, down in the hollow. By the time they had streamed over the park palings the major portion of the field were tearing full gallop down the park, to make for an open gateway two hundred yards to the right of the line.

Nobody had viewed the fox away, but the thorny hollow no doubt had hidden him as well as the hounds on the line between cover and palings.

A halloo, a quarter of a mile ahead, now proclaimed the point, as a select few made straight for the palings.

To do him justice, Bumpus, with all his weight of years and of beef, could and would go, at all events for twenty minutes, wherever his hounds had a chance of a scent. Abreast of him, as he charged the palings, came the brothers Golightly, Joe Jelly the first whip, and Brooks, the sporting landlord of the Rutborough Arms; close in their track were Tom Swede, Jacob Plowman, and Harry Gates, local farmers, the first two riding to 'see, and the last named to sell. The Rev. Joseph Gosling rector of Acreton-on-Tythe, Messrs. Acres and Leases, two of the county magistracy, and Goldworthy, junior, partner in the Rutborough bank.

The next two enclosures were meadows; for Golightly has a penchant for dairy farming, and keeps as much grass as he can round his own house. The hounds were topping the second fence from the park as Bumpus and the rest of the first flight cleared the palings.

The halloo was apparently a true one, for the hounds were holding a line straight for it.

Round on the right, the main cavalcade were thundering, reaching for a lane which lay in the direction of the halloo. Whoever had viewed the fox had, no doubt, turned him; there would be a check; and, while Bumpus stood aloof, there would be ample time for everybody to get upon good terms with the pack.

The third enclosure was fallow, huddled and sticky from recent rains. Dick, on a thoroughbred, hustled on, along the top of the furrow, just as the tail hounds were disappearing through the farther fence. Bumpus pulled his weight-carrier together as he sank fetlock deep in the heavy ground, and so did his host. Sam looked round to see whence the halloo had come, and saw his own cowman standing at a gate and waving his hat. Farmer Gates, anxious to show off his five-year-old's abilities, before buyers had tailed, stood up in his stirrups, and closed up with Dick. The two abreast flew the straggling thorn fence that bounded the fallow, and made play at score from the rest of the field. Three more fields of deep-holding clay plough, in the last of which an open gate offered most welcome egress, and Dick Golightly had time to look around him as the going became firmer for a minute, over some clover seeds. Even among those who had held the line there was a tail. The rest of the field was nowhere; little more than a mile had been covered from the find, and already it was bellows to mend. The hounds were running mute, and scent breast high; do what they could, neither he, nor Gates, nor the first whip, could get into the same

enclosure with them. It was a godsend when the line for the next four fields lay close by a footpath, sound under foot and with low stiles, easy of negotiation.

Bumpus and Sam ranged alongside of each other as they reached the path.

"This can't last," said the master; "Gammon Woods must be his point;" and indicated with his whip a dark line on the horizon.

"We shall get on terms there," was all that Sam had time to say, as he pulled back, not to cross the master at the first stile.

The line lay down hill now; at the bottom flowed a moderate brook, while half a mile on the right of the last rising ground glowered the outlying spurs of Gammon Wood.

Gates was beginning to think the pace too good for him. Well though the five-year-old took his fences, there were no audience handy to see him. The sight of the cover was to him like an oasis to a caravan. Dick was first at the water; with a low fence to give a rise to it, and little more than seven foot from bank to bank, there was nothing to stop anybody; Joe Jelly came over close on his left; Gates bore to the right, in anticipation of the cover; and Bumpus, Sam Golightly, Brooks, and Goldworthy came down the hill, straight in the wake of Dick. Up the slope in front of them the hounds were streaming, holding, if anything, a better scent than ever, and showing no symptoms of any line in the direction of the cover.

"I'm blowed if he ain't going clean past the woods!" exclaimed Bumpus, as he eased his nag to a trot up the steep and sticky fallow on the farther side of the water.

"Mortal early for foxes to be travelling; not half way through the season," said the parson, as he also eased his horse up the slope.

"Where the devil did he come from?" pondered Sam, as he noted one of Dick's Rutborough boys jogging up the field, a little to the right, and evidently enjoying the sport.

True enough, the Gammon woods, and their shelter, were disdained; and when the brow of the hill was reached the only clue to the line which the master and his immediate followers could obtain was the flash of Dick's pink two enclosures ahead, leaving the woods clear upon the right. Acres, a light-weight, made play to go by in the heavy ground; a loosish rein over the last plough caused him to make a mistake two fences further on, and a white stern toppling over his horse's withers was the last seen of him. Brooks drew a shoe; and Plowman remembered that he had to ride his beast to market next day.

A good four miles ride so far, and not a vestige of a check. If fences had been stiff, there is no saying where even the leader would have been; as it was, the pace and the holding nature of the plough had told already their tale, and but six horsemen were in sight, and those at straggling intervals.

"It must be Guttlebury Woods then, he's making for," puffed Bumpus; "hold up! you!" as his horse floundered in taking off out of the heavy clay, and tore his way through the briars of a rambling fence, nearly landing on his nose.

Sam and Swede took advantage of the gap, but the last fence but one was fatal to the latter's half turnip-fed animal; he cleared it, crossed his legs, and rolled over into the ditch, whence Swede extricated him an hour and a half later by the aid of a neighbour's team and a rope.

Another welcome descent to the banks of the canal reservoir, apparently dead for the line of Guttlebury Woods. Two enclosures ahead sailed Dick, and nearly as far ahead of him the hounds, in a cluster; a tablecloth might have covered them as they took the line of the reservoir's bank.

For an instant it looked like a check, as they streamed over the bank; then Mermaid and Merryman held away by themselves to the left, at more of a racing pace than ever, and the rest of the pack turned round and streamed after them, right away from the direction of Guttlebury, which showed dark and gloomy half a mile on the further side of the reservoir.

"Well, I am blowed," quoth Bumpus, as he mopped his face, and proceeded to take what advantage he could of the position, by cutting the corner across the angle where the hounds had turned.

But the master's weight was telling a tale, and two fences further on Bumpus's horse, unable to rise under it, tangled his legs in a strong binder, and came to earth. Bumpus had let go his reins, and found the clay hang heavy upon his spurs as he shuffled after his nag. Sam and Gosling seeing him unhurt, found the pace too good to stop for further inquiry.

To the master's delight, a lathy gentlemanly looking boy, with very muddy legs and a red face, appeared at the far end of the fallow, and stopped the runaway.

Bumpus climbed gratefully back to his saddle, more out of wind than ever.

"Have you seen the fox?" he asked of the youth.

"The hounds have gone straight away past that gate," was the reply, and the youth pointed to an outlying homestead, to which Bumpus set his horse's head, the animal subsiding accordingly into a very heavy trot.

Twenty minutes later, by dint of keeping his eyes open, lavish use of spur, careful selection of gaps, and cautious dismounting at every fence that was in the least degree substantial, Bumpus succeeded in kicking his tired horse to the bottom of the bank of the Rutborough Waterworks, where the hounds on the top were clustering round the mouth of a disused culvert.

The culvert went straight down, with a fall of seven or eight feet, and a diameter of little more than eight inches. At the bottom of the pitch the culvert sloped away underground, and finally joined a watercourse two hundred yards distant, on the opposite side of a field.

At the top of this culvert, where it joined the reservoir of the waterworks, was a small hand floodgate.

"Gone to ground," puffed Bumpus.

"Seems like it," said Gosling, who, with the two Golightlys and the first whip made up the group of horsemen.

Bumpus pulled out his watch, to time his own arrival. "An hour and seventeen minutes from the first, and, bless me! it must be fifteen miles from point to point."

There was no help for it. Not a terrier within a couple of miles, even if one to face a fox could be found. As for digging out, the idea was hopeless.

"Pity to lose such a good fox," said Bumpus. "Hounds have fairly earned him. I shan't draw again to-day, gentlemen."

Not to exaggerate, the real distance compassed in this justly celebrated run, may be set down as a net eleven miles, and Dick Golightly avers that he had reached the culvert at least seven minutes before Bumpus came in view. A year has passed since this meet at Wurzel Grange, and though many another fox has since been found in the home covers, and some of them show their masks at the kennels, no fox has ever since taken the same line, and Bumpus agrees that this is conclusive evidence that he must have been a traveller. He points to the record of this event with pride, and in his book of "excerpta venatica" has pasted accounts from all the sporting and local papers, portraying the deeds of the day, the distance covered, and the killing pace of the run.

If any one ventures to hint that he likes to see hounds assisted in the cold clays of Rutshire, he quotes this red letter day as a sample of the scent that the country can hold, and of what his hounds can do "if left alone and not meddled with."

CHAPTER III.

"WHAT BECAME OF THE FOX."

That evening, in the billiard-room of the Grange the brothers Golightly discussed their cigars, and the four guests from Rutborough School played a four-handed game of billiards.

Sam's face was a study.

"I rather wish you fellows had kept your secret," he said, after Dick had finished an explanation. "If old Bumpus ever gets to the bottom of it, he'll think I had something to do with it, and will consider himself eternally insulted."

"His ignorance is bliss," said Dick. "He'll hug himself over this run till Doomsday."

"What was your drag made of?"

"Fox litter, aniseed, and red-herrings, lapped up tight with twine, and sewed in canvas—four bags of it. I'll warrant it smelt enough. The bags lay in the tool-house all last night; just go and put your nose in there for a second, you'll find stink enough to wake the dead."

"How did you get rid of each bag when you changed hands to lay? I should have thought the hounds would have run up to the one they had been following, and have stopped to worry it."

"Each change was at water. Charlie Sprynt laid his line in the cover while you were all at breakfast. A trail like that will live for the best part of an hour, hot and strong. He sank his bag at the first brook near Gammon woods, and Ned here took another line on to the reservoir. Then the next change was at a horsepond you passed by the roadside; and the last bag is down the culvert now."

"I wonder I didn't see it when I looked down."

Willie Wake looked up from his cue, as if butter would not melt in his mouth. "I drew the floodgate an inch or two, for a few seconds, and swilled it down with water. I had hardly finished when the hounds came to the bottom of the bank; if there had been any one up there with Dick, he'd have seen me sneaking off to hide within a couple of fields off."

"But how came Hodge, the cowman, to be halloaing a fox away, just as we cleared the park?" asked Sam, "There must have been, at all events, some fox afoot."

"Devil a bit. I gave him ten shillings to stand there and halloo, just two minutes after he should first hear the hounds giving tongue. You musn't sack him, Sam, I pledged myself to him for his place."

"Sack him, Dick! I daren't now, even if I could spare him; he might round upon us out of spite—rather. I shall have to keep him for life as a pensioner, if he chooses to levy black mail upon me, lest old Bumpus should ever find out the true story of the run of the season."

ADVANCE AND RETIRE.

IN THREE SCENES.

THEY meet together in the dance,
Her eyes are dewy, his on fire;
So fervidly doth he *Advance*
And she as tenderly *Retire*.

Both wear the hues of one romance,
Both share the same divine desire,
But, he all sunshine doth *ADVANCE*,
As dew in flowers doth she *Retire*.

Sequel as ever. Turn your glance,
The finger-point a village spire,
Towards which together they *Advance*,
And, wedded, will as one *Retire*.

Her leaning coyness doth enhance
The oneness now he nestles nigh her,
As arm-in-arm the twain *Advance*,
And side-by-side as one *Retire*.

ADVANCE OR RETIRE.

SCENE II.

"Weird Woman, listening, deep in trance,
What sing they in Heaven's Christmas Choir?
Is it Humanity's *Advance*,
Or must the tide *Retire*?"

"What is it Bismarck waits and wants,
As darkly cowed as cloistered friar—
Who while the Babblers all *Advance*,
Can silently *Retire*?"

"What do they dream to-night in France,
Who rake the ashes over fire?
Of Landmarks that may yet *Advance*,
And foemen who *Retire*!"

"Within the Urn for us, what chance
Lurks dimly, O permitted pryer?
Will England headlong first *Advance*,
Then turn tail and *Retire*?"

Or, if the *White Horse* once more prance,
Till fetlock deep in gory mire,
Will England lead the world's *Advance*,
And bid the Turk *Retire*?"

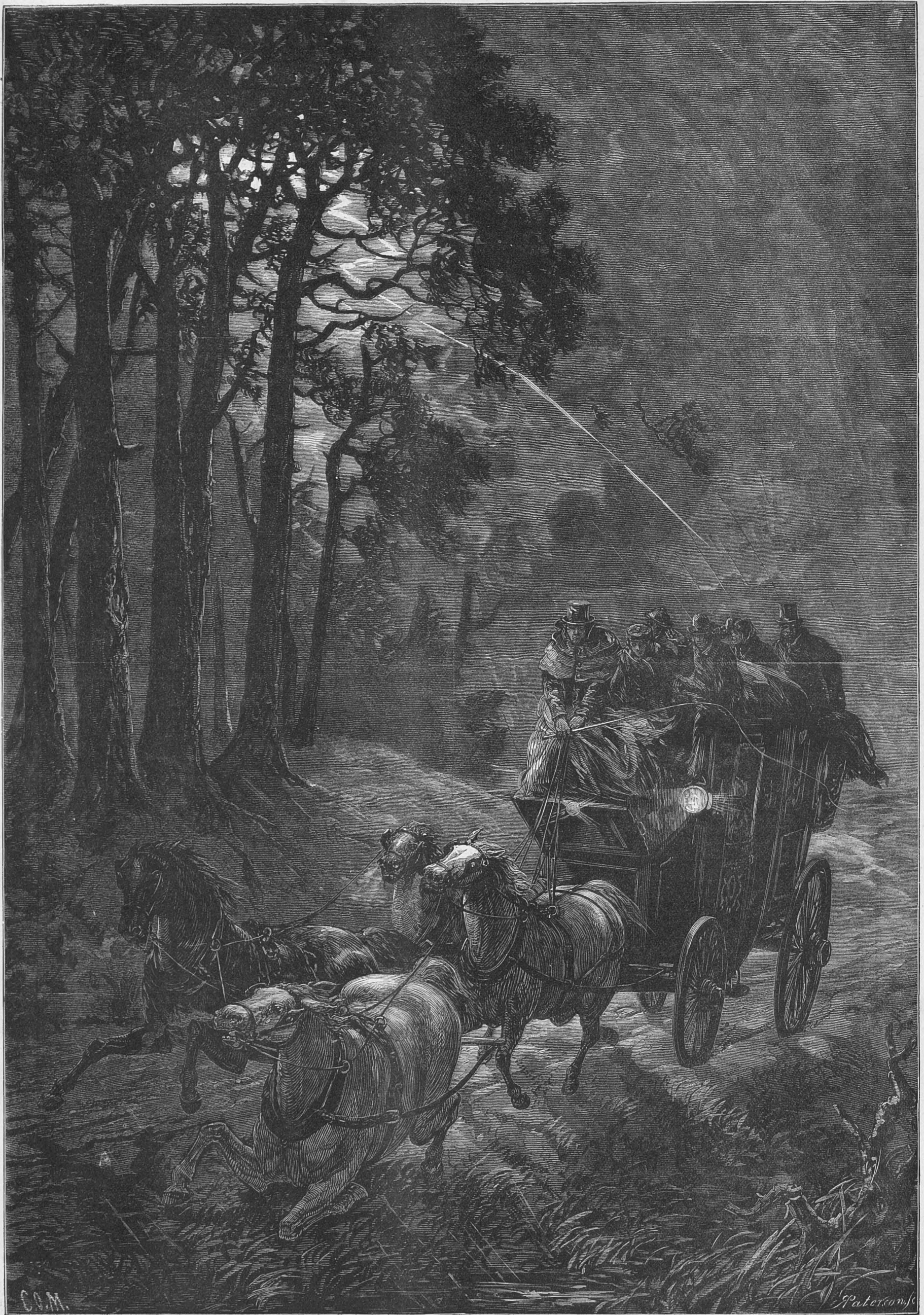
"The ebb and flow of Circumstance
May sink us low, or float us higher,
But still the eternal must *Advance*,
The transient still *Retire*."

ADVANCE.

SCENE III.

The sleep of the Dreamer is dying,
The dream is about to be born,
The night, with its phantoms, is flying—
A night that shall never return;
She feels the first airs that come sighing
With new life, to waken and warn,
Of a Dawn in which tears shall be drying
And hell-fire no longer will burn;
The old earth shall cease from her crying,
Nor vainly to heaven will yearn;
The heavens to earth are replying
With aid for the weary and worn;
Immortals with mortals are vying
To lift up the fall'n and forlorn;
Humanity's hands are untying
The Crucified's Chaplet of Thorn;
Our questionings, *Howing and Whying*,
Some fruit we can feed on have borne;
We stand 'twixt the dawning and dying
That mingle their verge and their bourne:
Lo! the Past in its shroud-shadow trying
To hide its face, tortured and torn!
Lo! the Future all goldenly lying
In light of Millennial Morn!
And the sleep of the dreamer is dying,
The dream is about to be born.

GERALD MASSEY.



ESCAPE FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH.—DRAWN BY C. O. MURRAY.



THE TWINS.—AFTER H. S. MARKS, A.R.A.

THAT TERRIBLE TRAGEDIAN.

BY BYRON WEBBER.

UNLIKE the majority of the successors to (well, suppose we say) David Garrick, who for many generations have murdered sleep at the Theatre Royal, Billingham Gimlet, Mr. Cromwell Skawl entered upon his brief but brilliant career there, unfriended and unknown. No gorgeous patronymic, emblazoned upon hoardings and dead-walls in letters six feet high heralded his approach. His portrait, in or out of character, was not to be found amongst the studies of theatrical celebrities on view at Brown Windsor's, the barber. The Blue Dragon, which in common with a cooperage, a manufactory of effervescing waters, the warehouse of a pious grocer, and the private abode of an itinerant vendor of the oyster and its humbler bivalvular connections adjoins the Theatre Royal—even the Blue Dragon knew not Skawl. As for Weevil, the indefatigable representative of the *Billingham Bugle*, he went so far as to speak of the coming Cromwell with scorn.

"For all his prenomyn—Cromwell! forsooth! he can't be up to much. Why he is not able to show a single opinion of the press!"

No more he was. At any rate he did not. Nevertheless, he came down upon the Billingham play-goers with surprising vigour, and secured the allegiance of the gods in a single night. His great scene (the piece was the well-known West-End drama—The Smuggler's Lair, or the Secret of the Snook), in which, aided by seven inches of antique cutlass, he repels the combined attack of innumerable coastguards, and covers the retreat of Malvina, who is attired in a costume composed of equal parts of schiedam and cigars—his great scene, sirs, was received with terrific thunders of applause. His second essay (as Hamlet) was, if possible, more successful than the first. The lightest word of angels and ministers harrowed up the echoes of the adjoining cooperage, and shook the lemonade manufactory to its very basement. The duel with Laertes became in his hands an exercise pleasingly destitute of that subtle cunning of fence with which it is generally invested. The demise of Hamlet was preceded by a back-fall which nearly brought down the house. The gods of the Theatre Royal, Billingham Gimlet, were unswerving in their fealty to Skawl, but he failed to propitiate the pit, and that part of the house which was known as the boxes remained from the beginning to the end of his meteoric career almost untenanted. "Almost untenanted." Night after night Weevil was at his post. The parlour of the Blue Dragon had essayed in vain to draw him out on the subject of Skawl. To every inquiry he made one reply, and that was, "Wait." Billingham waited, and in the Wednesday's edition of the *Bugle* read these words:—

"We think it desirable to postpone the publication of a lengthy and exhaustive analysis of the extraordinary performances of Mr. Cromwell Skawl, the leading man of Mr. Plantagenet's company. At present it suffices to say that for twenty years—the limit of our experience of Billingham Gimlet theatricals—no wearer of the sock and buskin has appeared in this circuit so admirably adapted to the requirements of a Saturday night audience."

On the night succeeding the publication in the *Bugle* of this scathing sneer the parlour of the Blue Dragon was packed with controversial drinkers. Skawl's idolators and Weevil's adherents were present in nearly equal numbers. On all sides were heard such remarks as—"It's a burning shame" and "Serve him right." Johnson—otherwise Clifton Somerville—a distinguished local amateur, posed as chief defender of Weevil; the landlord of the Blue Dragon officiated as leader on the other side. He knew where the shoe pinched. Don't tell him. Because Mr. Skawl—who was a gentleman, mind you, and paid his way like a gentleman—had declined a part in Weevil's five-act tragedy, the *Bugle* was down upon him. And they boasted of a free press. But let the critic look out.

"Why?" observed Johnson.

"Why!" exclaimed the landlord; "because the worm will turn, and!"

"Skawl is a creature of that kind, eh?" interposed Johnson.

"Pray, don't interrupt me," rejoined the landlord with dignity. "I was about to say, gentlemen, that if the Critic of the *Bugle* dares to put his nose into the theatre to-morrow night he will hear something to his advantage."

"All right—I say all right, gentlemen. He shall be there."

And there he was. Meantime Grubb, the low comedian, a friend of Weevil's, had waited on the offending censor and vainly urged him to absent himself, on the ground that Skawl was a dangerous, not to say a bloodthirsty person—a very terrible tragedian off as well as on the stage. The play was Black-eyed Susan. A select assortment of the followers of both tragedian and critic lent animation to the pit. The gallery bristled with Montagues and Capulets. Weevil was the sole occupant of the boxes.

It was not long ere he felt that he was desecrated from beyond the footlights, and that the event whereof he had had warning was imminent. Gnatbrain and Dame Hatley eyed him with furtive tremor. The leader of the orchestra gazed upon him with an expression of unspeakable pathos. The check-taker comported himself as though he knew that the unhappy critic's time had come.

And William—or let us say Cromwell Skawl, what said he?

You shall hear.

"WHAT found I in the whale's belly? I will tell you, I will tell you, ladies and gentlemen, patrons of the Theatre Royal, Billingham Gimlet. I found this notice of my performances—which had been cut from the last edition of the *Billingham Bugle*, and which I PUBLICLY BUR-R-N! Thus—ha! ha!—thus do I tr-r-ample on the insolence of Gesler!"

And, suiting the action to the word, the angry British seaman strode majestically to the footlights, and with an impressive flourish consigned the opinion of the press to the ignominy of the flames. On the part of the chiefly bewildered audience there was an infirm attempt made at a cheer, which was followed by a less feeble effort at a hiss. The play thereupon went on without being further garnished with gag. Next day the censor took steps to bring about a return match with his adversary. It chanced that the local morning papers had contained a report of the capture of a vagrant whale in the neighbourhood of the Orkneys. That account was made to do duty for a text upon which Weevil hung a vivid description, which by no means lacked embellishment, of What was Found in the Whale's Belly, at the Theatre Royal, Billingham Gimlet; and in the next ensuing Saturday's *Bugle* the extravagant recital duly figured.

In the course of the same day the critic sought his friend Grubb, actuated by a natural desire to learn the effect on the enemy of his last shot.

"What does he say, eh? My dear boy, you must guess. His language is simply horrible. He vows if you enter the theatre to-night he'll have your heart's blood. I don't want to frighten

you, my boy, but I sincerely believe that something dreadful will happen if you show up."

"Let it happen!" exclaimed Weevil. "What do I care? Does he think he can brow-beat me with impunity?"

"Now don't talk rubbish, Weevil; you ought to know better. What I want to prevent is a row. I have just left rehearsal, and there he is tearing around the place like an escaped madman."

"Grubb, I shall be at my post."

"Very well," replied Grubb with an air of peevish resignation, "I say no more. If you will insist on shoving your hand into the fire don't complain if you get burnt."

As is usual on a Saturday in Billingham Gimlet, especially when the blistered bottle-blower and bibulous pudder have received the fortnightly recompense for their toil, the bill of the play was voluminous and heavy. The first piece was the famous five-act tragedy of St. Vere the Vampyre, or the Bloodbibber's Bier. Comic singing by Mr. Grubb, and a dance of All Nations by Signora Seville, were amongst the minor entertainments provided by the enterprising manager between the two dramas. The latter of these was described in the bill as a local production of thrilling interest, entitled The Recluse of Roseberry Topping or Canny Yatton to the Rescue. Alas! alas! that local play was never produced—but let us not anticipate.

Four acts of the Vampyre had been bolted when Weevil mustered courage to pass the money-taker and dare the ordeal of Skawl's vengeance. The gods were in high feather. Their idol's exertions had evidently met with their entire approval. "How did tha' like that, Geordie?" shouted a brawny puddler to his mate at the other side of Mount Olympus, "Fine, wasn't it." "Ay, lad; yon chap's something like an actor," was the correspondingly stentorian reply.

"Does tha' see t' newspaper chap?" inquired an equally loud-mouthed patron of the local drama—and the local press. "Ay, lad, if aw was that Skawl and land him yan." "Sarne him reet, tee," was the rejoinder. Weevil made an utterly futile attempt to appear at his ease. It was all very fine to pose as a martyr on behalf of his paper, but he did not relish the part. At that moment he would have given a good deal for the power to transport himself *a la* Mrs. Guppy-Volckman to the summit of Roseberry Topping. He even admitted to himself that possibly Skawl had some little excuse for feeling rather annoyed at the treatment which he had received in the columns of the *Bugle*. Grubb was in the right. Our critic ought to have remained away and allowed the tragedian time to recover his usual equanimity. But there—Weevil was in for it, and must see it out.

An impatient pull at the bell brought to a summary termination the last figure of a set of quadrilles, and the curtain rose on the last act of the Vampyre. A young gentleman of prepossessing exterior, who had been entrusted with the trying part of the Vampyre's victim, appeared, and said:

"Ha! I am close upon min our, and St. Vere, the haughty Baron of Thunderville approaches not. Whither can he have fled? The sombre bird of night hoots in the ivied tower. The harvest moon——"

An ominous pause ensued, during which the uneasy victim approached one of the wings, and spoke angrily to the scene-shifter.

"The sombre bird of night——"

Another pause, succeeded by a sudden descent on the opposite wing, and the propounding of a series of hurried and by no means inaudible inquiries.

Once more—

"The sombre bird of night——"

"Twist is neck about and get on, can't tha'? Thou's said that twice afore!" exclaimed a disgusted god.

"Hush—order—put him out—ssss!" and similar ejaculations and sounds arose from all parts of the house, until the unhappy artist, driven to desperation, metaphorically abandoned the sock and buskin and appealed to his friends in front.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am exceedingly sorry to think that any performance of mine should meet with your disapproval. I am not to blame, I assure you. I have done my duty—(hear, hear)—but the fact is, a certain gentleman who ought to have come on with me refuses to do so."

Enter Mr. Cromwell Skawl in the habit of a vampyre, and evidently running over with mischief. Striding with vengeful aspect to the extreme edge of the stage he, holding poor Weevil with his glittering eye, and pointing him out to the, by this time, excited audience, began—

"Yes, ladies and gentlemen, I did refuse to come on while that person was in the house. He has libelled me in his contemptible paper. He says I play to you, ladies and gentlemen—and who should I play to, I should like to know, but the only patrons of this theatre. (Cheers.) What does he know about acting? ('Nowt!') and 'A deal mair than tha' does, my lad.' He has injured me, and I will have reparation. ('Quite reet!') 'Order, let him finish his yarn.' If he have the courage of his opinions let him come behind now and fight it out."

The cheers and inarticulate sounds of disapprobation which were provoked by Mr. Skawl's extraordinary challenge produced a Babel of noises that defied description. As Weevil stirred not in response to the tragedian's invitation, but sat perfectly still, striving ruefully to appear as though he rather enjoyed the unrehearsed drama which had been produced at his unwitting instigation, Mr. Skawl, with increasing valour, resumed his address—

"Come on, sir—if you dare. But you dare not. Why are you here every night? Is it to criticise the drama or the ladies of the company? Is it——"

At this juncture poor Mr. Plantagenet advanced from the back of the stage with the obvious intention of taming the furious tragedian. His pacific advent had, however, the opposite effect.

"No, I will not calm myself. If you paid me my salary——"

"Really, Mr. Skawl, I——"

"I repeat it, sir, if you were to pay my salary, and that of the other members of the company, you *might* interfere."

"Ladies—gentlemen," exclaimed the distressed manager, appealing to the members of the company who now came trooping on to the stage, "is this fair? Have you any cause for complaint? Speak, Mr. Grubb, you are an old member of my company. Pray inform the audience whether this monstrous charge has any foundation?"

Mr. Grubb expressed his satisfaction, and Mrs. Grubb expressed hers, while the rest of the company followed in the same strain, but it was quite impossible to smooth the troubled waters with any quantity of oil of that kind. The curtain fell. The members of the company, including our friend the Terrible Tragedian, resumed their every day attire, and the audience (including Weevil) dispersed highly delighted with their inexpensive entertainment—for poor Plantagenet had felt it incumbent upon him to return the money that had been paid for admission.

Time, the great healer of sores and kindly obliterator of rough corners and dark hues, has converted into an amusing picture this remarkable passage in a provincial journalist's experience. Therefore over the sequel of the scene in the theatre, which was not without its elements of real tragedy—over the final exit of the tremendous Thespian from the town which yet cherishes recollections of his lurid presence, the present writer draws a not unfriendly veil. Amongst the professional indiscretions of his youth we are seriously assured that Weevil—Mr. Skawl may take it from us—includes his entirely unprovoked newspaper attack on THAT TERRIBLE TRAGEDIAN.

MY BRILLIANT FRIEND.

A ROMANCE OF DRAMATIC COPYRIGHT.

I WROTE a play; the acts were four,
The scenes, I think, were ten or more;
Of incident 'twas very full—
The dialogue was never dull.

I had a friend of reputation
In matters that amused the nation;
Adviser, author, critic, he
Seemed likely to advantage me.

I took the play to him; he said
"This, sir, does credit to your head;
Whilst this—I mean the graver part—
Does equal credit to your heart.

"I'd read it through; but time, my friend,
I can't on manuscript expend.
Were it but printed, now!—but, ah!
Excuse me!—dinner-bell! ta, ta!"

A printer in hot haste I sought,
Who printed in a narrow court;
An apron with a bib he wore,
And had of types a wondrous store.

'Twas greatly to his credit that
He never hid what he was at;
Of risk he partially got rid
By sending "proofs" of all he did.

He sent me one; that very night
His Printer's Devil struck a light,
And burnt (see Captain Shaw's report)
My manuscript and all that court.

I sought my friend, and said "Your hint
I've taken—here's the play in print."
"Thanks!" he replied, "my hansom waits;
I'm off to the United States."

The passage out was very nice;
No passenger was——! more than twice:
The berths were never used o' days,
My friend had such amusing ways.

The captain blessed him when they parted,
The crew were simply broken-hearted.
He read my play from out the book
The last time just off Sandy Hook.

A deputation, beau and belle,
Conducted him to his hotel;
A serenade was ready—but
He'd—started for Connecticut.

I heard of him in Tennessee,
At Minnesota, Milwaukee,
He lectured at the Brooklyn Chapel
'Bout Eve, the Serpent, and the Apple.
Beecher adored him, Tilton lov'd him;
The Moultons really hand-and-glov'd him;
The best society invited him,
And Mary Walker M.D. lighted him.

At length he left the Empire State,
His courier-bag a bag of weight;
His trunks well crammed with many a "notion"
For his good luck upon the ocean.

The passage home was very fine;
He came back by the Inman line;
And, till they reached the Channel chops,
Basins were nowhere, so were mops.

The scene at Liverpool was great,
For there they'd all to separate;
The captain would have kissed him, when
He left the ship—but both were men!

I called upon him at his Club—
The Sock-and-Buskin Junior Grub;
He never spoke about the play,
But "ta'd" and took a bag away.

That courier-bag, I'm very sure,
Contained the proceeds of his tour;
I saw him call, from off the rank,
A cab, and drive to Coutts's bank!

I met him next in Rotten Row,
Linked to his noble friend De Vaux;
And when I thought I'd caught his eye,
Up came his gallant friend, Sir Guy.

They nudged each other in the ribs,
And chuckled over awful fibs,
As bucks of middle age will do
Who think they know a thing or two.

I called my friend aside, and said,
"One moment! has the play been read?"
"Ta, ta!" he cried, "I'm off to-day
For India, Brindisi way!"

* * * * *
My hair was thinning, getting white,
My waistcoats gradually less tight;
I'd given up all my hopes of fame,
And worked for money, not for name.

When Some One sought by law to stay
The run of a successful play;
And strange! the play they sought to stop
Was mine!—they called it "Turveydrop."

The judge declined to interfere,
"The play'd been acted many a year."
'Twas hard upon the author—but
'Twas printed at—Connecticut!"

Amazed, I sought that famous Club—
The Sock-and-Buskin Junior Grub—
Unluckily Fate! an hour before
My friend had sailed for Singapore!

* * * * *
I've never had the thing explained,
For nothing of my friend remained.
A Chinese pirate interviewed him,
And barbarously barbecued him!

* * * * *
At times I go to see my play,
In a soft melancholy way;
It does for "stock," it does for "gag,"
It nicely meets a topic "tag."

It's been re-named three times or more—
Eastward they call it "Battledore;"
Whilst, with the higher-cultured West,
As "Shuttlecock" it has more zest.

Some use it kindly as a whole,
Some wrench its body from its soul.
I don't like Vivisection—but
'Twas published—in Connecticut!

THE TEES TICKLER.

THE RESPECTABLE SEAFARING MAN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MR. ANDREW O'ROURKE'S RAMBLINGS."

CAPTAIN PAUL always spoke of himself as a Respectable Seafaring Man. Those who knew him called him Captain Paul, and described him as the Respectable Seafaring Man. But he speaks so seriously of any other man as of himself, and when Captain Paul's friends described him as the Respectable Seafaring Man, they were not half so grave as the captain himself when he uttered the words. It should not however be inferred that the good captain was not a respectable seafaring man. His character was above suspicion, and he had from boyhood been brought up to the sea. His brother skippers, less nice in etiquette and language, called themselves captains simply. But, by legal right, it was only those who commanded ships belonging to the navy had any claim to the title. Captain Paul was known officially as a master-mariner. He had little affection for this designation. It grated harshly on his ears; it seemed to imply a question of ability and an inferiority of social distinction.

When Captain Paul entered into particulars of his position, he was wont to describe himself as in a perpetual hand-to-hand fight with the wolf at the threshold. He, and his wife, and his children, were always models of cleanliness and of curious, persistent attempts to disguise repairs in outer garments. He explained his patches by asking what was the good of wearing decent broad-cloth among rusty chains, tarry ropes, and oily cabin tables.

On the Sabbath, he took a sober delight in showing the good people of the city that his figure suited finery. His coat on that day was black and whole, and his waistcoat of heavy woollen material, rich in device, and of a full liver colour. But, upon that day, as upon every other while ashore, his chief ornament was a cylindrical hat of surprising stature.

This hat, above all other things, made his appearance noteworthy. The captain's figure was considerably below the medium in height; with his hat, he looked like a diminutive juggler balancing a black pillar on his head. Where this hat had been procured, no one could tell. Another like it had never been seen. Inquiries addressed to him about his hat he received blandly. But no satisfactory account of it had ever been obtained. The one thing about the hat more surprising than its great height was the length of time he had worn it. Some said they remembered it twelve, others fifteen years.

The hat had not been without its adventures and vicissitudes. Wags had set upon it, and ill treated it. Plots had been laid for its destruction. Oil had been poured into it, and soap rubbed to it against the nap. It had been tacked down to a counter, in the hope that, when he laid hold of it, the crown might come away from the sides. It had been driven over his eyes at night, and flung under the hoofs of horses. It had swum for hours in the river. A mast-top had been crowned with it, and by way of getting it down, a bullet sent through it from the deck. It had been sat upon, and tramped on, and thrown on fires, and kicked through the mud. But, in each case, after a temporary absence, it reappeared, looking younger and glossier, like a Faust of hats, until the wags gave up their plottings and bad usage, and, in the end, began to regard it with superstitious reverence.

Captain Paul's bad fortune was equalled only by his good temper. He had left a brig on the rocks of the Azores, and a barque in the Straits of Terra del Fuego. A fine schooner had leaped upon the rocks of Caernarvon Bay, and quivered to death beneath his feet. He had been owner of these three vessels. Then he had to go master for others, and his luck grew no better—if possible, it became worse. Sailors declared that out of the fairest summer day Captain Paul could compel a storm, and call up from unfathomable depths of ocean jagged-toothed ridges of rocks. No voyage went over without disaster of some kind visiting the ship of which he was master. Now it was a mainmast lost in the Bay of Biscay when deep-laden with copper ore. Now a cargo of Russian corn shifted off Malta. Now a leak five days out from Riga with hemp. Now a fire aboard with ice from Drobach. Now a touch upon the ground at Barmouth. It had happened over and over again that members of his crew were lost. Upon two occasions not a soul but the captain survived to tell the story of the wreck.

In time, to all the other difficulties into which his misfortunes betrayed him was added the unwillingness of seamen to ship in vessels he commanded. If it became known that Captain Paul had been appointed to such and such a vessel, a crew could hardly be procured for her in the city, and men had to be sought at distant ports whither his fame had not travelled.

On account of all his misfortunes and ill-luck, he grew superstitious. He leant towards fatalism, and believed in ghosts. He would refuse to ship in no vessel, no matter how rotten the hull, or decayed the gear. He wanted, he said, to eat bread and cheese, and get bread and cheese for his family, and he didn't think the waters of the sea were going to play him any tricks at this time of his life. He could not believe that water was to be his fate. It had had plenty of first-rate chances, and if water was to be his fate, why didn't it take one of them? It possessed no terror for him. To a certain extent he despised it. He had so often triumphed over it in his own person, and as it was the only thing he had ever triumphed over, he not unnaturally held it in rather low esteem.

But though he despised the sea on his own account, it made him nervous on account of others. Remarks dropped half in jest had eaten into his mind. He became sensitive on the subject of all those men who had lost their lives while sailing with him. If he could follow the bent of his impulse, he would stay at home, take a garden, and grow sweet thyme and marigolds for the markets. But then no man beginning gardening at his time of life could keep a family out of sweet thyme and marigolds. His profession was the sea, and he knew nothing of any other. He would gladly have set up a marine store, but the difficulty of capital was not to be overcome. Under the pressure of his fancied responsibility he grew anxious, and wasted into a condition of weak, tremulous apprehension.

Noises in the night affrighted him. Shadows he conjured into the shapes of those who were gone. He slept with his head covered, and put wool into his ears on deck after dark. The lapping of the water at the bow seemed voices wailing for help. Often in the mysterious night, while the vessel stalked onward without sound, he had crept over the bows to see if some poor, half-spent soul, were not clinging to the loose end of a rope. The mutter of his children seemed the whispers of dead men's children reproving and cursing him. He bitterly asked himself in extenuation, was he to allow his own children to starve when he could work, and there was work to be done.

As the catalogue of his misfortunes lengthened with years he found greater difficulty in obtaining employment. Shipowners grew shy of him, and feared to trust their property in his charge. They imported masters from other ports rather than have Paul. Fate was dead against him. Men would not engage if he were to be skipper, and owners would not employ him as long as they could find any tolerable substitute.

As the winter, with which this story is concerned, drew to its darkest depth, the Respectable Seafaring Man entered the narrowest ways he had known. For months he had been idle, and although he abated no whit of his claim to be considered a

respectable seafaring man, he had been seen on the Sabbath without his famous hat! Those who lived near him could tell, and did tell with tender regret, that poor Mrs. Paul was managing without her china, and her eight-day clock, and her silk gown, of which last she had been so proud, for he had brought it from foreign parts. Indeed, although the neighbours did not say it, they were reticent out of sorrow, most of Captain Paul's furniture was gone, and his little children were now kept permanently in the back of his six-roomed house; for they were not, as the neighbours put it, softening the facts, as tidy as they used to be.

Towards the close of a November evening in this dead waste and mid-winter of Captain Paul's dereliction, he sat sadly smoking a pipe in the office of James the shipbroker. Of late the shipbrokers had got tired of him; he took up room in their offices, and was of no profit. They left off bidding him the time of day, and gradually hints fell that the offices were small, and could accommodate none but those who had business to do.

But where could the unhappy man turn? Though he was without work, as long as he sat with master mariners, in the midst of the old sea-talk, he was holding up his head among his compeers.

On this particular night he could not bear to go home and look at his half-clad little ones. He preferred staying out until they were—asleep. He could not walk about for, if the truth must be told, he had eaten nothing that day, and was not able to stand very firmly on his feet. The tobacco he smoked had been given to him by a chance acquaintance, on the grounds of its excellence, because the servants of the Government had never set eyes on it.

This Respectable Seafaring Man was in very low water indeed, and he was beginning to wonder whether he should die of starvation that evening, or hold out yet another day. He could not beg, and there was absolutely nothing more at home to pawn. As he sat, smoking and thinking, he wore neither waistcoat nor shirt. That morning he had procured a short meal for his wife and children, by leaving his shirt and waistcoat with the rest. He had told his wife, for there was a kind of foolish, bragging spirit in him, that he was to spend the evening with the captain of a foreign barque. The barque really existed, but the engagement was fiction.

The tobacco happened to be excellent and the fire warm. No noise disturbed the office save the scratch of pens, and an occasional word passing from one clerk to his fellow.

The fire was warm and the tobacco good, and the Respectable Seafaring Man was very weak; so the fire and the tobacco overcame him, and he fell fast asleep.

He dreamed of the good old times, when he and his family had roast beef and bacon on Sunday; of the time when the very brine of his harness-casks would nourish, it was so ripe and juicy. Anon, it was early morning, early summer morning, and they were in sight of home, and the ship's boy brought him a cup of strong rich-smelling coffee, and biscuit covered all over with butter. Then it was night off a dangerous coast; he stood forward of the galley, and could smell the delicious odour of soup which the cook was making for his supper.

This Respectable Seafaring Man was experiencing a starving man's dream. He had eaten nothing that day. And now that he is asleep and cannot hear it, the whole truth may be told—he had eaten nothing the day before.

While Captain Paul sat dreaming by the fire, Matthew the Skinfint entered the office.

Matthew owned a number of crazy old vessels which he sent out upon all kinds of dangerous and uncertain voyages. He was noted all through the City for his stinginess, and the insufficient wages he paid. He never could retain in his service men able to earn under any other masters. Only the aged, the deformed, and the unfortunate accepted berths aboard his vessels.

Matthew walked with a quick step behind the little counter, and going up to the high stool upon which James the shipbroker sat, asked:—

"Have you the papers of the Star of the Sea all ready?"

"Yes," answered James; "here they are. Do you intend giving them yourself to the captain?"

"Confound the captain!" cried Matthew, angrily. "He's done a nice thing! Refused to go at the last moment! But I'll see what the law can do with the blackguard."

"Awkward. That's very awkward."

"Infernally awkward. Particularly as those meddling sanitary scoundrels have served a notice that if the vessel does not leave the river to-morrow's tide they'll have her towed into the bay at my expense and risk."

"I'm told the bones are very bad—green and fat—and that her hatches are smoking like a steamer?"

"They're not very good. But we've got the two hatches off. What more can we do? The wind isn't fair, and I've no one to go in her. Do you think those sanitary fools are in earnest?"

"As sure as you are standing there. You see, there's a good deal of fever in the city, and everyone declares the bones are frightful. People on the quay can hardly breathe, they say."

"I wish, James, you could get some one for her. I wouldn't mind giving a gratuity above the wages. We ought to be able to get a good man if that were known."

"Bones are always objected to. Most of the skippers I know wouldn't take double wages and sail shipmates with them."

"Well, you see, she's only about half full this time. A man can't pay wages and port-charges and victual a ship these times, unless he's prepared to put anything that's going into her. Can't you think of anyone?"

"Stop!" cried the shipbroker suddenly. "There's Paul. He's asleep at the fire. Would he do?"

"I suppose we must have him if there's no one else. Yes. Wake him. I'm the most unlucky man alive."

James went over to the Respectable Seafaring Man, caught him by the shoulder, and shook him, saying:

"Captain Paul! Captain Paul! Rouse up. Will you take the 'Star of the Sea' to Plymouth with bones?"

Half awake Paul staggered to his feet. His faculties were benumbed, and he imperfectly appreciated what had been said. The words seemed part of his vision, and he gasped out:—

"Bones—yes, bones! Anything! I'll eat anything—only for God's sake be quick—I'm starving."

The two men started back in horror. There was no mistaking the man's words, and the truth of what he said was warranted by his pale face and blue lips.

"Here, Tom," cried the shipbroker, turning hastily to the office messenger, "Run out for a glass of brandy and some biscuits. D'ye hear!"

The man went in sympathetic haste. For, although every one laughed at the Respectable Seafaring Man anyone that knew him would grieve to see him thus.

Before the starving man had fully recovered from his heavy sleep the brandy and biscuits came. Paul vainly endeavoured to recover the admission contained in his words; but he was visibly faint; there could be no mistaking the symptoms of his disease. The heart of James, the shipbroker, was deeply moved, and after Paul and Matthew had arranged matters, he put gold into Paul's hand, saying:—

"You'll want to get some things before you go. It is necessary you should be aboard to-morrow at noon. You can pay me back at the end of the voyage. Here are the papers."

The brandy and the biscuits, together with the good news,

made Captain Paul feel quite hearty and buoyant. He went out and bought tender juicy steaks, and aromatic tea, and sparkling sugar, and snow white bread, and fresh yellow butter, smelling of honeysuckle, and so freighted turned towards home.

The whole family held a revel that night. When the children were gone away, he turned to his wife, and said:

"Who knows, Ellen, but I may get on with old Matthew, and please him, and he may leave me the Star of the Sea for good?"

"Who knows?" she answered, with an encouraging smile.

Early enough next morning he was aboard the Star of the Sea. She was a dilapidated old coasting vessel, long lost to all sense of decency, and quite satisfied to live on any terms. Her decks trembled when a foot crossed them. Her topsides gaped. Her covering-board was eaten through here and there. Her old masts and spars were warped and spliced, and when her sails were loosed they hung in ragged tatters. Even now, although lightly laden, and lying in smooth water, the pumps had to be looked to every two hours. There was no crazier craft afloat. Add to this the crowning fact that she was laden with the most objectionable cargo ever put on board ship. One could scarcely breathe on her decks. A mile down to leeward the people called out against the suffocating fumes.

Notwithstanding all her drawbacks, Captain Paul never put his foot aboard a vessel with a more grateful heart. His wife should draw his wages while he was away. His children could not be hungry for a month or two. He certainly did feel a little pang when he reflected that the cabin of a bone vessel was hardly a fit place for a Respectable Seafaring man—but then the children and his poor wife. So he issued his orders to the five men in as brisk a voice as had ever passed his lips.

That evening, obedient to the instructions of the sanitary officers, the vessel dropped down the river, and let go her anchor in the bay, half a mile from the leeward shore. Still the weather was not fair. She had been ordered to lie here, as no people lived down in the wind. Nothing particular occurred that day. There was no reason why Captain Paul should not be satisfied with his crew. It is true they had grumbled a little when they saw "unlucky Paul" was to be master, but after a while, as soon as they had dined, all unpleasantness disappeared from their manner.

The short November day soon came to an end, and heavy darkness fell upon the waters of the bay. There was not exactly a fog, but the air was full of moisture. The Star of the Sea rocked sleepily to and fro. Except the watch, which consisted of one man, the crew had gone below. The one man was forward. Captain Paul thought he would see that all was right in the hold before he turned in for the night. So, having lighted a lantern, and wound his muffler around his mouth, he thrust a ladder down the main hatch, and descended.

The hold was dim with noxious vapours, and horrid with creeping things. He shuddered as the bones slipped beneath his feet. They had been beaten flat with huge mallets; but, still, as he trod on them, they glided and glided, like lithe snakes. He was obliged to stoop almost double, as he moved, for the unclean cargo reached within four feet of the deck. As he stood at the pump-case, selecting where they should lay the few yards of spare sails, and oilcloth, and chains, to keep the cargo from shifting, he started violently, and staggered back against the mast.

There was no mistaking it. Between the smashed ribs of a horse and the green yellow head of a cow, the thing shone bare and startlingly white. He summoned courage enough to swing the lantern over the horrible object. After that, there could be no excuse for doubt. The lower jaw-bone of a man, with all the teeth in it, lay before him.

With a cry of terror, he leaped to the ladder, mounted it hastily, and, tripping over the top round, fell almost fainting to the deck.

He struggled to his feet, staggered against the bulwark, and gasped for air.

What brought human bones in his cargo?

Privation had made him weak, and unstrung his nerves.

"What brings human bones in my cargo? Human bones! It's horrible beyond bearing! In any other man's cargo they would not be half so bad. No, not half so bad; for when I think of all the poor fellows who perished near me—Ugh! Human bones! I had better starve than live for this!"

His memory and imagination wrought until his condition became intolerable. He magnified what he had seen in the hold; he could not persuade himself but that half the cargo consisted of human bones. His old superstitious feeling came over him with double force, and disturbed his reason. His fancy showed him, lying below, a hideous gathering of skeletons, with empty eye-sockets, in whose vacant depths burned revengeful light. He had often scrupled bringing bad luck ashore; now, all those who had fallen out of existence under his sway had come back, and were beneath the deck. Oh! it was maddening!

He went to the water cask, and having filled the dipper, dashed the water over his face. This steadied him a little.

After all, it had been only one bone. Only one. But then the cargo was deep down in the vessel, and no more than the surface could be seen. How could he tell but that there were thousands of bones, human bones, scattered through the others. When he had seen one exposed, the chance, the certainty was that there were more—a great deal more—a hundred, a thousand.

Then his imagination took fire again.

Nothing was more reasonable than to suppose a hundred complete skeletons huddled together in this vessel. The bones might now be separated, and have no apparent connection with one another. But what would they do at midnight? What would the bones of those men who had lost their lives under him do when the sun was remotest, and the influence of night and evil loosed the spirits of the unseparated? Would the bones spring clattering together, and assume their old relations? Would they leap up and come to him, and drag him with fleshless arms over the side? And what then? What then?

He shook from head to foot, and held the bulwark for support.

What then? Would they drag him under the water, and in some sightless haunt of the injured dead keep drowning and bringing him back to life again, until the Angel should summon the deep to yield up its vast tale of men for the Final Day?

The horrors of the picture overcame him, and with a low moan he fell to the deck and rolled over.

The man of the watch came to him, raised him, and dashed water over his face until the fainting man returned to consciousness. Then he helped him down to the cabin, brightened the fire, and recommended the captain to take something hot before turning in, and said:—

"You know, sir, 'twas the bones did it."

"Yes," moaned the unhappy man; 'twas the bones did it."

The sailor withdrew; and the other, acting on advice, took something hot and went to bed.

Overcome by the fatigues of a busy day, worn out by excitement, and soothed by the unaccustomed stimulant, he fell into a profound sleep.

He lay with his ear only a few inches from the bulkhead between the hold and the state-room. The noxious vapours trickled through the seams, and filled the cabin. He had left the door open for air, and the lamp lighting for company, should he awake in the night. There was scarcely a sound aboard the vessel. The chain grating occasionally in the horse-pipe was the only noise that invaded the silence, save the wash of the bay at the

water-line, and now and then a soft movement among the cargo as, wasted by exhalation, some small piece fell through the interstices.

It drew towards midnight.

Captain Paul slept on. He lay upon his back. The clothes had slipped off his head, and the lamplight shone full upon his face. On his face the sweat was gathering. His mouth was trembling. His eyes were half open. His hands clenched, his breathing stertorous. Captain Paul was dreaming, and in his dream he was wishing that he might die.

In his dream the worst fancies which had distracted his waking moments had taken shape, and he was pursued through tangled forests by the unapparelled skeletons of his dead crews. Now they seized him, and strove to drown him in a stream of insufficient depth; their attempts failed, only to be repeated innumerable times.

Now he had been drowned and lay ten thousand fathoms below the surface of the ocean, sensible still. Ghastly skeletons goaded on obscene creatures of prodigious shapes to attack him, and he was powerless to resist, powerless to move, powerless to extinguish what remained to him of consciousness. He could neither close his eyes, nor avert them from the degrading monsters that wound and crawled about him. After an interminable time spent in this appalling region, in this unendurable company, one of the fleshless heads drooped to his ear, and a shrill whisper told him he was to spend his whole eternity as he now lay. Upon this he gathered all his faculties and screamed, and the vision passed.

Its disappearance was followed by a condition of lethargic wakefulness in which he was unable to separate the substantial from the visionary.

He knew he was aboard the "Star of the Sea." He knew he was lying in his own berth. He knew these were the deck beams overhead. Beyond this point he was not clear about anything. He could not stir hand or foot, and his tongue clove to his palate. The light of the lamp became enormously magnified. He thought at one time that the firmament must have been rent open, and the insufferable radiance of Heaven disclosed.

What could it be?

The lapping of the water against the side of his berth swelled into the trampling of a mighty host. The light seemed to grow stronger, the tread of the multitude more loud, and the swaying of the ship became the trembling of earth beneath ten thousand myriads of feet.

The clock struck twelve.

Ah! He was right after all! That was the Last Trumpet. Heaven was open, and the races of Adam were rolling towards Jesophat.

Before the last chime of the clock had ceased to vibrate a sound came through the bulkhead from the hold. This time it was no faint rattle, but a long crushing and grinding noise, followed by a wild clatter as though the cargo moved by some power beneath were suddenly rising up. Against the bulkhead, dry hard substances began to beat and clatter, at first faintly, and then louder and louder, until a perfect shower of blows fell upon the planking.

Cold sweat poured down the listener's face. His eyes dilated, and his muscles were stiff with dread. Then a voice said in a dreary, monotonous tone:—

"Captain Paul! Captain Paul!"

Instantly upon hearing his name pronounced the lethargy left him, and he sat up, muttering inarticulately.

"Captain Paul! Captain Paul!" the voice went on, while the clatter ceased. "We are the bones of the men you murdered."

He shrieked and covered his head.

"Murdered by sailing with us. You are accursed upon the sea. Misfortune follows you wherever you steer. Why do you continue at the sea when you can do so only by adding year after year to our number?"

"What can I do?" hoarsely asked the captain, covering his face still more closely, and sitting motionless, as though invisible hands held him on every side. "Leave this ship at once and for ever. Never put foot aboard a ship in open water again. If you do not promise this we will come to you and tear you out of your berth and drag you to the bottom of the sea."

He was without even the hope that terror would kill him. He could not speak. Again the awful rattling went on with tenfold violence.

"Do you consent?" Demanded in a threatening tone.

"I do! I do! In God's name I do. Mercy! Mercy! Mercy!"

"Then swear it."

"I swear it, as I hope to see Heaven."

"Swear it by us, the dead."

"I swear."

"If you break this oath your doom is sealed. Remember!"

Once more the appalling noise was resumed. It galvanized the man into motion. He sprang out of his berth, and without waiting to take a single thing with him, dashed up the companion ladder, rushed to the stern of the Star of the Sea, drew in the painter of the boat, threw himself into her, and sculled with all his might to the shore.

Impelled by terror, he soon reached the land, and having moored the boat to a tree, set off at the top of his speed to the city. By the time he gained it, the dawn was in the sky.

How different was the story he had now to tell his wife from that of just thirty-eight hours before. He had not only experi-

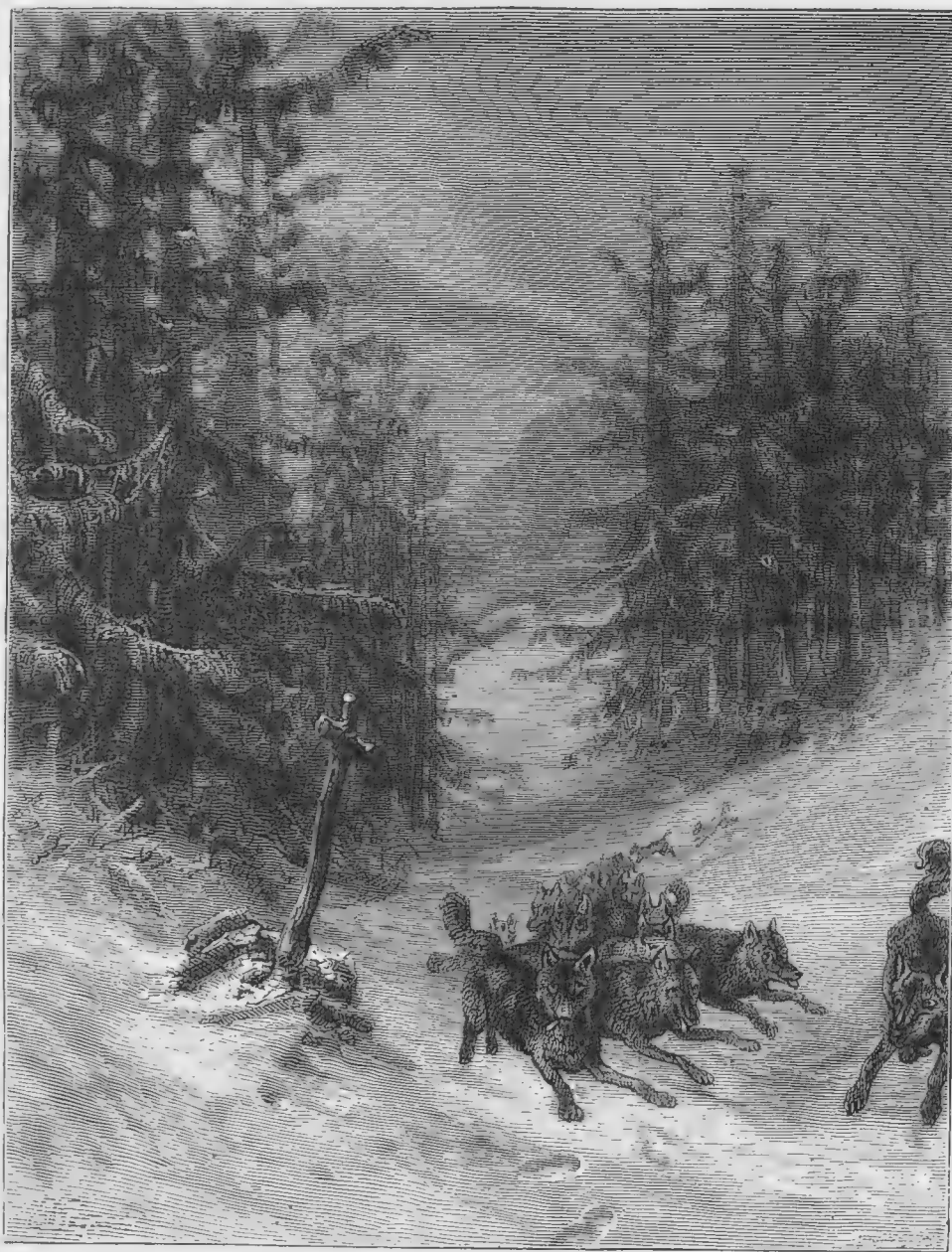
enced terror enough to kill an ordinary man, but abandoned his vessel, and solemnly forsworn the sea for ever. What was now to become of her, and his unfortunate children?

When noon came, and the city heard he had the previous night run away from his vessel, the surprise and displeasure ran riot. The wind had changed and was now fair. As soon as Matthew the Skinflint saw this his anger knew no bounds, and without a moment's delay he had the unhappy captain summoned to appear before the court. The case was heard the next day, and then Matthew the Skinflint told his tale, and, after him, a sailor bore testimony to the desertion.

Then, amid black looks and chilling coughs, Captain Paul came forward and spoke.

First he had a kind of nightmare, that almost maddened him. In the middle of his dream or vision a noise arose among the cargo, and the bones began to rattle, and he was affrighted almost to loss of reason. He gave the matter of the words spoken by the awful voice, and wound up by telling of the oath, and declaring that no matter what the consequences he should keep that oath.

He who pleaded in the interest of the accused asked if he might put a few questions to the sailor. The sailor was recalled. It was elicited from him that when Captain Paul went aboard the men determined to leave the ship in a body. Later they decided to try and make him leave instead. At midnight they went down into the hold and made a violent disturbance among the cargo, and having terrified the master put the oath to him, as described. The flight of Paul followed immediately.



"A TROOP OF HUNGRY, DESPERATE WOLVES."

When the unlucky man heard this he smote his palms together in anguish, crying—

"Oh, why did you do this! You have stolen the bread out of the mouths of my wife and little ones. They will starve, for I can never go to sea again. I must keep my oath! I must keep my oath! I must keep my oath!"

Those who administered justice said that owing to the circumstances of the case they should inflict only a nominal fine, provided he returned immediately to his ship.

"My oath!" he cried. "My oath. I cannot break my oath!" They tried to reason with him. They assured him an oath so obtained, and so sworn, was not good in the eyes of the law.

But he held to his purpose, and would not be moved.

Nothing, they explained, remained for them to do, but to fine him. In default of payment the accused to go to prison for one month.

The Respectable Seafaring Man told those who sat in judgment that he could pay no fine, and submitted to be led to prison without a word of complaint or protest.

On the morning of the tenth day of his incarceration, he sat wearily counting the sluggish seconds, and wondering how it went with his family. Suddenly, the bolts and bars of the cell were withdrawn, and a man in water-bailiff's uniform entered. The man took off his hat, and said:—

"Captain Paul, I have been sent to fetch you. There is a cab waiting. Can you come at once?"

"How can I go? My time is not up. You are not playing me any trick?"

"Far be it from me to play any trick on a man in trouble. I have been sent for you. You can come with me. The fine has been paid, and you are to see those who paid it. I am to tell you no more, if you please."

The other was stunned and stupefied. He did not try to guess from what quarter deliverance had come. "It can't be my wife," he reflected, heavily; "she would have come for me herself, poor girl."

In a few minutes, he and the water-bailiff were in the cab. They drove rapidly through several narrow streets, and stopped finally at the offices of the Harbour Board.

"What can it mean?" thought the unhappy man; "some new trouble, no doubt." He asked the water-bailiff, "How's the wind?"

"Nor'-east."

"Ah! it's always from the eastward when my luck is at the worst."

He was conducted into the Board-room, where all the Commissioners were sitting.

"Here's Captain Paul," cried the water-bailiff, as the Respectable Seafaring Man arrived at the end of the long table, and stood facing the chairman.

"Captain Paul," said the chairman, arranging some papers before him, "I am to inform you that the attention of the commissioners has been attracted by the late trial in which you occupied a prominent position. They have seen with regret the position in which you were placed by a cruel plot. They have observed with sympathy the extremity to which you were reduced by your adherence to what you believed to be a moral bond, extracted under the operation of that cruel plot. By private subscription among themselves they have raised a sum sufficient to pay off the fine inflicted upon you. By a unanimous vote they have elected you harbour-master, in the room of Captain Joseph, deceased. They desire me to express their conviction that one who has with such fortitude and determination followed the dictates of his conscience when counter to his interests, will always perform his duty fearlessly and to the best of the sound judgment they know him to possess."

The very first sign of returning prosperity was the reappearance in its accustomed place of the Respectable Seafaring Man's wonderful hat. Two days after his appointment he strode down the quays under the shadow of that strange appliance. But no one now dared even to think of it disrespectfully, for he was harbour master of the city. By right of his office he might have worn a low hat with a gold band. But he forewent the privilege, and never afterwards abandoned the hat which had lent him distinction in the days of his obscurity.

A WOLF STORY.

ABOUT five hundred English Christmas-days have come and gone since packs of hungry wolves made winter nights terrible in "Merrie England." The little Britons, Saxons, and Normans, who were awakened in their warm beds and cried out in fright, or lay trembling, thinking of all the dreadful wolf-stories they had heard, when yule logs blazed and crackled in the hall, have lived the lives we live, and died the deaths we have to meet. Our sturdy ancestors, hearing such hated sounds, sprang up with fiercely set teeth to grip bow or pike, dealt so effectually with wolves that we have scarcely a record of the terrors they inspired, save that which probably exists in the children's old-world nursery story of poor Little Red Riding Hood.

Cruel and cowardly, fighting only in packs when fierce with hunger, or when at bay and mad with desperation, the wolf has earned for himself a reputation which gives a new zest to the blaze of a Christmas fire and the safety of a well-guarded household amongst the descendants

of its old English exterminators in various parts of the world. The bold Anglo-Norman barons, who held the Walls, or Welsh, in check, and afterwards led them as conquerors into Ireland, set about the extermination of wolves in that country, but their newly acquired territories required all their strength to guard them, and but little time was left for hunting wolves. Hence, three hundred years, and even many more, after their extermination here, they still abounded in the wilder parts of Ireland.

One Christmas-eve, a pair of young Irish lovers, denied the privileges of open courtship by harsh parents, met by stealth after sunset in the thick gloom of the winter evening. In the dim faint light which penetrated a swampy patch of woodland, they fell into earnest discourse, and walking on were some distance from their homes, when suddenly a long frightful howl burst upon them, and they instantly knew that it proceeded from a troop of hungry desperate wolves.

With a cry of horror the girl clung to her lover, who, drawing his knife, prepared to defend her and himself. All around was now dark, and beyond the few feet of snow surrounding them nothing was visible. A terrible scene ensued. The wolves sprang at once upon their prey, and cries of agony told the torture their fangs inflicted. The girl was dragged to the ground, and the youth struggled desperately with his foes. His efforts set him free, and he sprang to rescue the maiden; but she was already partially devoured, and he barely escaped the savage brutes whose meal he had interrupted by leaping into a tree. There he remained until the grey light of morning revealed a scene of horror more readily imagined than described.

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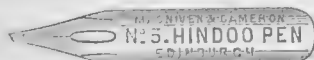
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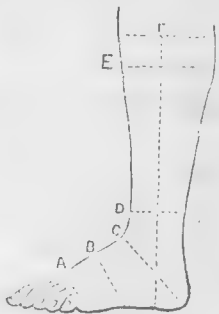
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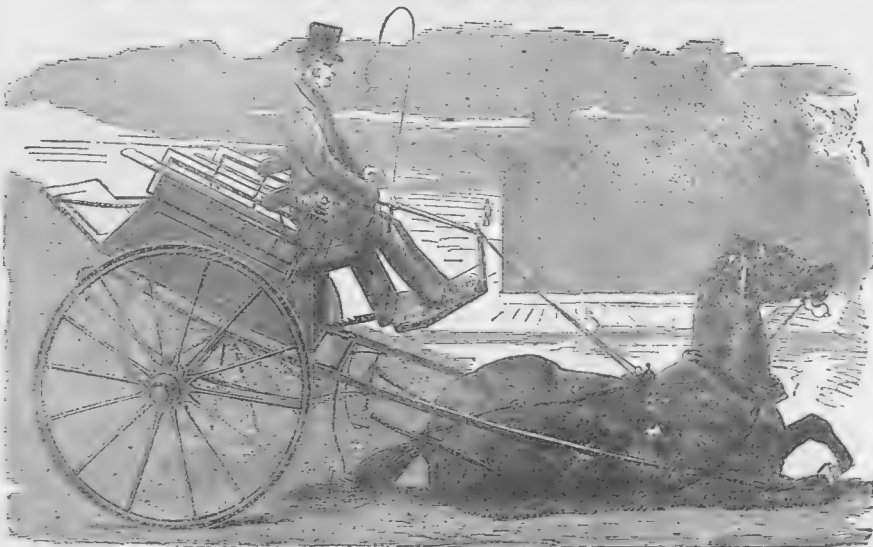
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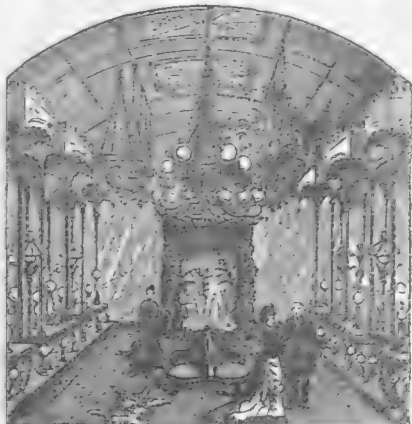
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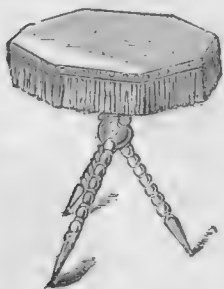
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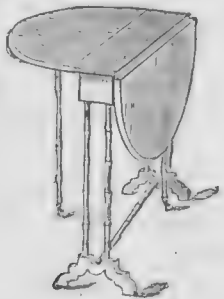
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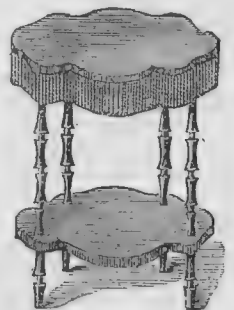
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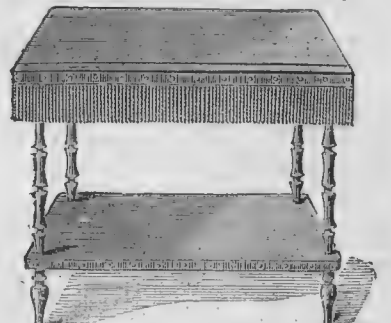
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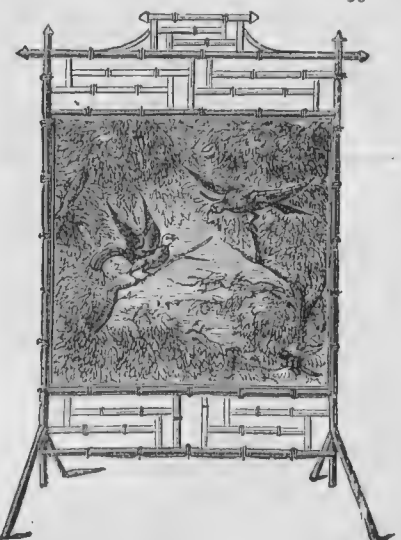
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SONNET.

WHEN northern tow'rs and temples put aside
 Their homely robes and stand in vestal white,
 The bridesmaids of the moon, my heart takes flight
 To regions rumour tells of, and I glide
 Amazed by joy to see blue Adria's bride:
 And then in dreams I watch the argent light
 Roll from each dome and palace height
 In flaming banners down the opal tide.
 If some hushed terrace yield a moonlit form
 Lissom and lithe, I wonder if that moon
 Discover charms like hers whom all applaud.
 I know her not; yet breathe her name to warm
 And purify; in dreams to sweetest tune
 My fancy names my fairest vision, Maud.

RICHARD DOWLING.

THE LAST OF OUR FAMILY GHOST.

BY R. B. WORMALD.

"WALL, old hoss, I kinder wish yer joy on't, I du. This store-keeping was never to the liking of an out an out cuss like you, not nohow, I reckon. Not that you a'int stuck to it like a 'tarnel limpit, and I never wish for a better or straightfor'ader pardner, but I allus could see that you never cottoned to it kindly like. And now you've growed all of a sudden into a barrow-nite, a real live barrow-nite, with a pile o' dollars a year, dern my skin as soon as I've fixed this 'ere store business properly if I don't take a run over to the old country and see that 'ere benighted old castle o' yours, you've so often talked about."

The speaker was Mr. Hannibal X. Mugg, my partner in a so-called drystore, a most estimable personage; and the scene, a small town or settlement about a hundred miles north of 'Frisco.

Let me say a few words about myself. I was the grandson of Sir George Hazlemere, of Hazlemere Castle, an old family seat and famous show place, in Clayshire, where I was brought up; my father, who was a younger son, having died when I was quite a child. My grandfather, who as perhaps was only natural, hated his eldest son and heir with a cordial hatred, in consequence, I think, of some family dispute, the rights of which I do not remember, brought me up, and often expressed his regret that it was out of his power to leave me the estate, which was strictly entailed. He, however, sent me to Eton and Oxford, and always promised to provide for me, but his intentions in this respect were abruptly frustrated one fine morning, by an attack of apoplexy, which carried him off before he had time to make a will. I was then in my second term at Oxford, and well remember receiving the news of my relative's decease in a formal letter from my uncle the new baronet, which also conveyed the curt intimation that I need not look for further assistance from him, as my grandfather had expended upon me in his life time a considerably larger amount than I was entitled to as the representative of a younger son. Under these circumstances my mind was quickly made up. Thanks to the liberality of my late grandfather I had some £500 or £600 in my possession, and with this sum I determined to emigrate and push my fortunes in a new world. Two months later found me a stranger in the streets of New York. My career here, I must admit, was not a success. Commerce, on a small scale, did not defray the cost of the brass plate that garnished the door of my office; journalism, likewise on a very small scale, proved equally abortive, the paper with which I was connected going to "eternal smash," as my enterprising co-proprietor termed it, so soon as he had spent the thousand dollars which he had considerably borrowed of me to start it; while my third line of business, that of general agent in partnership with an English ex-captain of dragoons, a gentleman who for suavity of deportment and general smartness could, I think, have "given weight" to the cutest Yankee I ever came across—indeed, I subsequently learned he had been cashiered for card sharpening—would I think have turned out a profitable speculation, but for the abrupt disappearance one afternoon of my ex-military colleague, with the remainder of my small capital, which I had been induced, in an evil hour, to invest in the concern. Thus, almost completely cleaned out, I took the advice of a New York acquaintance, and made the best of my way—then a long and wearisome journey—to San Francisco, which was at the time just rising into importance after the first collapse of the gold mining fever. Here chance threw me into the way of my worthy future partner, Mr. H. X. Mugg, to whom I have already introduced my readers, and after a time we became fast friends, the original inducement on his part, as I still firmly believe, being the intense gratification, which, as a thorough going republican, he felt at being associated, on terms of equality, with an English baronet's grandson. All the little remnants of my outside gentility, had I need scarcely say, been rubbed off by the rough time I had experienced in New York, and I heartily entered into a scheme propounded by my new acquaintance to start a partnership "store" in the new settlement of Troy—that name will do as well as another—which he said offered a splendid opening for such a line of business.

The new firm of Mugg, Hazlemere, and Co., for I am proud to say I was not snob enough to sink the family name, made its entry into public life on a somewhat limited scale—our combined capital barely amounting to three hundred dollars—and I need scarcely add there was no credit "out West;" but my new partner proved to be one of the shrewdest and most long-headed men of business I ever met, and, as I afterwards found, as upright and honest as the day; and we soon began to do a lively trade, principally with the mining population, who spent their money as easily as they made it. As our capital increased we added "notions" of all kinds to our small stock, and before we had been in business a twelvemonth our store was the "tallest" in the town. By the end of the second year the profits rolled in so fast, that one night, over a pipe and grog, I began seriously to consider—to the intense amusement of my matter-of-fact colleague, who laughed uproariously at what he called my old country notions—how long it would take to amass a sufficient sum to purchase a snug freehold estate in one of the home counties, when my speculations were abruptly cut short by the delivery of a letter bearing the London post-mark. It proved to be a communication from Messrs. Twister and Short, of Lincoln's-inn, our family solicitors, enclosing a newspaper paragraph giving particulars of a "Lamentable Accident," whereby Sir Henry Hazlemere, of Hazlemere Castle, and his two sons had lost their lives through the capsizing of a small sailing boat, on a lake in front of the family mansion, and winding up with a list of the numerous county families who would be thrown into mourning by the sad event. Messrs. Twister and Short's letter contained a formal corroboration of this intelligence, and concluded by conveying their congratulations to me on my accession to the baronetcy and a rent-roll of £20,000 a year, with a suggestive hint that as "the firm had enjoyed the confidence of the family for such a long period, they sincerely trusted, &c."

I confess, I was in no small degree upset by this unexpected

piece of news, but words fail to describe my partner's reception of it. Never at any time a demonstrative man, he at first ex-pectorated comprehensively but dubitatively, and transferred a huge "plug" from one cheek to the other slowly and solemnly, then coughed and expectorated again; and finally, as though feeling that something was expected from him, he broke out into a kind of wild Indian war-whoop, smashed two tumblers and a long pipe, and, seizing me by the hand, gave vent to the "congratulatory address," which I have feebly endeavoured to reproduce at the commencement of my story. How the little "one-horse" town of Troy opened the eyes of wonderment when it heard the news; how the headquarters of Mugg and Hazlemere was besieged by a legion of excited customers, all agog to shake hands with the junior "boss"; and finally how Hannibal X. Mugg stood drinks at the chief liquor store to all comers for four-and-twenty hours together, in honour of the occasion; all this I will not attempt to describe, for it is beyond me. All I know is, that as I shook hands for the last time with my worthy partner, prior to departing for England, I really experienced a pang of regret at leaving a spot where I passed what were, after all, two of the happiest years of my life.

Six months later I found on my breakfast-table, at Hazlemere, a letter bearing the New York postmark, in the superscription of which I recognised at a glance Mr. H. X. Mugg's well-known hieroglyphics. The writer stated that he felt so lonely and miserable after my departure, that even store-keeping ceased to have charms for him; and he had ultimately disposed of the stock and goodwill at a handsome profit (particulars of which he begged to enclose), and meditated paying his long-promised visit to the old country in general, and Hazlemere Castle in particular. A fortnight subsequently, on my return from dining with a neighbouring squire, I found—I confess somewhat to my surprise—my late partner comfortably ensconced in my study arm-chair, with his feet on the mantelpiece, smoking a huge cigar, and drinking his favourite beverage, "rum on ice," which my butler, with unspeakable astonishment depicted on his countenance, had somehow managed to procure for him. I need not say I was unfeignedly glad to see my old friend, and it was well into the small hours before we had half done our talk of old times; indeed, I had no small difficulty in getting my companion to bed, as when about half through his sixth cigar and second bottle of rum, he insisted upon producing the partnership accounts, and wished there and then to calculate what he considered to be my share of the profits consequent on the sale of the "store."

Next morning my friend insisted upon "doing the lions" of the place, and would brook neither denial nor delay. "I guess I came all the way from 'Frisco a-purpose to see your one feudal fixing, and dern me if I don't see it," was his reply to my suggestion that the castle would "keep" for a future day. And here let me say a few words respecting the mansion of Hazlemere. It had originally been an old feudal stronghold of great extent, dating from the days of the Plantagenets, and the whole, or at any rate the greater portion of it, had been in good preservation, and occupied as a place of residence, until about eighty years back, when my vandal of a great-grandfather pulled down about two-thirds of the original building, and grafted upon it a hideous block of architecture, such as was in fashion in the early days of George the Third's reign—utterly out of keeping with the rest of the structure, though comfortable enough internally. The old tower or "keep" still remained intact, and with it a considerable portion of what had been the great hall and the refectory, which were undermined by a long range of crypt-like cellars, that bristled with complicated windings like a rabbit-warren. Being, so to speak, a new comer myself, I naturally knew little or nothing of the antiquities of my own house, and accordingly summoned Mrs. Baker, an old lady brimful of legendary lore connected with the place, who had been a servant in the family—as her mother had been before her, for something like sixty years—and who invariably acted as guide to visitors who came to inspect "the ruins," a common circumstance in my grandfather's time, though, for some cause or other, strictly interdicted by the late baronet.

In company with that ancient romancer, who had a story to tell about almost every stone of the building, we made the rounds of the castle, to the undisguised delight of my Yankee visitor, who listened attentively to all Mrs. Baker's legends, though here and there I saw him wink incredulously, and once or twice he openly expressed his scepticism, much to the wrath of the old lady. For instance, when shown the blood stain which, according to the family tradition, marked the spot where my ancestor, Guy de Hazlemere was foully murdered by his brother, temp. Henry VII., he unhesitatingly asserted that it was not—could not be—blood; a blood stain, he reckoned, would have been wiped clean out ages ago. Some totty servitor, he guessed, had caught his foot on the refectory step, and spilt a flagon of Burgundy, that's all; but, blood or Burgundy, "Benjamin's Patent Detergerator," sold in New York City at 1 dollar 50 cents per packet, would take the lot out clean in no time, and he obligingly offered to send for any number of packets I might require by the next mail; at which heartless suggestion Mrs. B. shuddered visibly. The collection of armour seemed to interest him greatly; but, upon the production of the huge two-handed sword, reputed to have been worn by a crusading ancestor of mine in the Holy Land, he burst into an incredulous guffaw, and pointed to a mark on the blade, which he alleged proved it to be of Brummagem manufacture, not a century old. What, however, appeared to please him most of all were the remnants of a rusty fire-grate in a gloomy vault below the keep, upon which, as Mrs. Baker averred, certain impecunious forebears of mine were wont to roast recalcitrant Jewish money-lenders, when in pressing need of an advance. Mr. Mugg hovered over the time-eaten bars with the air of a connoisseur, grinned, expectorated, and finally burst into an audible snigger. On my inquiring the cause of this display of emotion, he replied, "That he should like to be a feudal barrow-nite jest for one half hour, and have Judah S. Manasses, who did him out of 500 dollars, seven years ago, in Swampsville, Ill., for that 'ere short space of time, in company with that 'ere stove, a lump of charcoal, and a gallon of rock oil—he jest should. You might bet your bottom dollar the old extortionator would sit on baked cracknel for a month to come." The picture-gallery he did not seem to care for much; indeed, he remarked that he "could git them things in New York City at some ten dollars a yard, gilt fixings included." But one family portrait, said to be by Vandyke, which represented a lady attired in an antique brocaded silk and a headdress of the time of Charles II., with a cold, hard, handsome face, appeared to arrest his attention in a marked manner. In reply to his inquiries, Mrs. Baker narrated a long-winded family legend, according to which, the original of the portrait had been one of the gay beauties at the Court of the Merry Monarch, and was smothered by her husband—who glared at us out of the adjoining frame—in a fit of jealousy.

"That's the lady of the haunted room, isn't it, Mrs. B.?" I casually inquired, and the ancient dame nodded a bland assent. Mr. Mugg woke up at once. What! a haunted room, with a ghost in it, he reckoned—a real live family ghost? There were few things, he guessed, which the New Country could not produce, and they were a ghost and a haunted room, and he forthwith overwhelmed Mrs. Baker with a flood of questions in connection with the new topic of interest. I could see that the old lady did not altogether relish the course the conversation had taken—still less

the somewhat bantering tone of my friend's remarks—but she answered all his queries quietly, and without any show of discomposure. There was, she admitted, a haunted room in the castle—in the old part of the building, at the end of the corridor over the great hall; but the servants, she believed, did not know of its existence, and no one living but herself had ever set foot in it. The room, she added, was precisely in the same condition—not a single article of its furniture had ever been moved—as it stood on the night the wicked baronet—"Beg your honour's parding; I mean Sir Reginald's respected great-grandfather's uncle"—died by his own hand seventy-two years ago. Then, after a pause, she said, quietly, "I will show you the room, if you wish."

It was certainly a curiously strange room, and I could not help expressing my surprise that, though I had been the owner of the place for more than six months, and had lived as a boy in the house during my grandfather's lifetime, I had never known of its existence except by repute. As the old dame unbarred the oaken shutters, and let a stream of daylight into the apartment, the surrounding objects, which had loomed indistinctly through the darkness as we entered, became visible with a sort of strange abruptness. The room was a hexagon in shape, and was draped on three sides with tapestry of a curious texture, but in fair preservation, which fell in massive folds from the ceiling to the polished oaken floor. The bed itself was of ebony, or of some similar wood, inlaid with silver, and curtained with rich brocaded silk of many colours, the coverlet being of the same material; while at the other end of the room, opposite the foot of the bed, hung a huge mirror of the Louis XIV. period, embedded in a fantastically-shaped frame, in which Cupids, Venuses, flowers, and cornucopias struggled for the mastery. A carved cabinet, also inlaid with silver, and a few chairs of the same material as the bed, and covered with purple velvet, now worm-eaten and stained, comprised nearly the whole of the furniture. On the mantel-piece I observed a couple of rusty horse-pistols, and an empty scabbard, and glancing back over the door by which we had entered, I confess I was startled to see a fac-simile of the portrait of the lady in the brocaded dress, which had struck my friend's fancy so much in the picture-gallery, staring down at us with her hard cold eyes.

"Darn'd if it aint the ghost again," was the exclamation of my Yankee friend; and, turning round to Mrs. Baker, he asked abruptly, "ever see her yourself, marm?" The old lady candidly admitted that she had not, but added that her mother—"Guess what your mother saw ain't evidence, nohow," interrupted Mr. Mugg; then taking me by the button-hole, he continued, "Look here, colonel, I reckon you know I allus like to see all there is to be seen, so if you and the old lady are agreeable, I hev a fancy to sleep in this 'ere bed for a night or two." At first I thought he was joking, but he was in earnest enough, and pressed the point so keenly, that I had no alternative but to comply with his request; and accordingly, in spite of Mrs. B.'s blank face, I gave the necessary instructions to have the room prepared for the following night.

We had a dinner-party on that day, and on the departure of the last guest—about 11 o'clock—Mr. Mugg, who I had observed had imbibed somewhat freely after dinner, took at two gulps his customary "nightcap,"—which, as he casually remarked, was "a dose for a grown person"—and lighting his candle, wished me "good night," a hint I shortly afterwards followed.

Next morning as I was going into the breakfast room, where I expected to find Mr. Mugg, who was always an early riser, I was informed by a servant that the head-keeper wished to see me, and for the next three-quarters of an hour I was compelled to listen to a long-winded story, told with many repetitions and variations, of a poaching affray which had occurred over-night in one of the Hazlemere preserves. Upon the departure of the keeper, I returned to the breakfast-room, and was somewhat surprised to find that my Yankee friend had not put in a appearance. I was on the point of ringing the bell, to make inquiries, when a tremulous knock at the door announced Mrs. Baker, who, with a face of blank dismay, informed me that a servant had been sent up twice to call Mr. Mugg, but had been unable to make him hear on either occasion. This intelligence, I confess, somewhat startled me; but putting a bold face on the matter, I walked straight up to my guest's room, and after knocking, twice without receiving any answer, pushed open the door and entered. In the middle of the bed, comfortably ensconced under the old-fashioned coverlet, lay Mr. Mugg at full length—sleeping the sleep of the just—while the huge mirror which, as I before said, hung on the opposite wall, was smashed into a thousand pieces, and among the debris of shattered glass that covered the floor lay a heavy bootjack. While I was wondering what could have happened, Mr. Mugg opened one eye after the other, slowly sat up in bed, and sneezed violently. "Have you seen?" I began—when he broke in with "You bet, Colonel, I jest hev! Look at that ere hole the tarnal critter has knocked into that looking glass o' yours." I suppose I smiled incredulously, when he added, "Wall, its true—true as taxes—that I tell yer. You see, Colonel, I had meant to keep my eyesight kinder skinned, and take proper stock of the ghost, thinking, may-be there mote be some little game tried on; but, somehow, that Bur—gundy of yours—which I must allow is a tall drink—made me drowsy like, and I dropped off to sleep slick as fallin' off a log, directly I was atwixt the calico. I guess I hadn't been asleep half an hour, when I woke up with a jerk, and there in the moonlight, standing straight before me, war that one-horse female ancestor o' yours, in the 'identical gown and other feminine fixings she hez on in the pictur'. Wall, at first I was skeered like—not onnatually—not been used to them kind o' things—but I soon plucks up, and says, 'Well, marm,' says I, 'if you've any re-mark to make, perhaps you'll kindly make it; for I guess my late pardner—the barrow-net's, Burgundy has made me kinder drowsy' like.' But she said never a word; so I began again. 'Marm, to re-I, I guess I'm an unprotected male, and you'll allow me to say I mark that if anybody was to come in, it might be considered indelicate like to find me alone in company with a female—a hem—ghost.' This I thought must fetch her—forgetting that she had lived in them improper Restoration times; but she only went on staring at me all the harder with her darned rattle-snake eyes, and never so much as opened her mouth. Wall, Colonel, I was natrally riled; so I stooped down and picked up that ere bootjack, and says, 'Now, marm—once for all—if you hev' anythin' to say, I'll trouble you to say it; if not kindly make tracks—thar's the door—or, by the Lord, I'll go for you with this ere small trifle.' This did it. She pulled out a yellor pocket-handkercher that would hev' done well with a week's washing, and burst into a loud boo-hoo. 'To think that I hev' been a respectable ghost, in a decent family, for three hundred years—' There yer wrong, marm, interposed I—if that old gent in the wideawake and cock's feather, asphixiated yer in Charles the Second's time—it can't be thro' hund—' But, lor bless yer, she didn't mind me a bit, but went on, 'For three hundred years, and should be treated in this fashion by a degenerate descendant (you see, Colonel, she took me for one of the family); but its for the last time. I'll never appear again—no, never, never, never!' And she finished with a war-whoop that would have done credit to a wild native Indian in Barnum's Show, and made at me straight. So I ups with the bootjack and lets drive. With a scream like a steam-engine—and a flash of blue lightnin'—she went slick through yon glass, scattering the smithereens all about the place—and that's the last I

saw of her. But I'm plaguey dry, Colonel, about the mouth—I think it must be with talking—. Just ring the bell for a whiskey, straight. I guess I've earned it, if only for clearing out the Family Ghost."

And so he did. At any rate the "haunted room" has been the nursery for the last ten years, and nothing has been seen of the ghost since.

PUFF!

THE EXPERIENCES OF A LUNATIC MANAGER. CONFIDED TO
HOWARD PAUL.

IF there is one man in London to-day, who sincerely believes in his heart of hearts that he is a born manager of a theatre, there are ten thousand. It is a common occurrence for amateurs to volunteer the suggestion that "the so-and-so theatre is a good property but isn't properly managed, you know." I have no doubt that Mr. Chatterton receives a hundred suggestions a month from his acquaintances of how such-and-such a class of production would elevate the character of his national theatre; I'll be sworn that astute Mr. Hollingshead receives piles of letters pointing out what pieces would make his fortune; and if Mr. Buckstone would tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, he hears from persons every day, (soi-disant authors and aspiring stars, for instance,) who tell him precisely how the Haymarket might be crowded nightly with rank and beauty—and in point of fact would teach him how to *manage* his theatre. It is a species of universal madness. A similar craze exists in regard to starting newspapers. When one reflects on the handsome sums that have been lost in these two enterprises, one marvels that men are not cured. An eminent dramatist once assured me that there could always be found somebody who would take a theatre, prompted by the curious vanity that he or she alone knew the exact secret of management, which necessarily implies that keen and comprehensive knowledge of public taste that is accorded to few. In a general way the victim tries the experiment, loses his money, and subsides into genteel obscurity, a wiser if not a better man. There is a case extant of a poor fellow who is now in sad confinement. I knew him in his lucid, bustling days, when he was always on the look-out for a theatre. He found one at last, concocted a barbaric spectacle, lavished his hard-earned savings on its production; the public did not respond, result—pecuniary disaster—then madness—since then Colney Hatch. I paid him a visit a little while since, and found him bristling with the wildest fancies. He half recognised me.

"I think I know you," said he looking suspiciously into my face—"but I'm sure you know me. I am Wyndham Flutter, formerly manager of the Royal Dusthole Theatre, Cranborne Alley. I am here on account of bad health. I am hourly expecting writs in the case of 'Flutter *versus* Dossey, comedian,' action of assault and battery with pulling of nose; another in the case of 'Plumper, comedian, against Flutter and Dossey,' action of assault and battery with a stuffed stick; in the case of 'Bubble, Birst, and Co., against Flutter and Dossey,' action of damages for defamation and injurious publication; in the case of 'Madame Frangipanni *versus* Flutter,' action of breach of contract, in the case of 'Chumpchops, the elder, landlord, against Flutter,' injury of property, and the case of 'Flutter against Clapperclaw,' false pretences; a cloud of writs are hanging over me like a black and angry pall!

"My dear Sir," he continued, "I am fifty years of age and lived forty-nine of them without a single law suit, but now they come in battalions. But I was prudent. I never married, and so had no wife's relations to harass me. I was never an heir-at-law, even to inherit a farthing, and when I had a contract to make I always employed a lawyer and paid him by the word, so it was explicit enough for two, if any of my employes had a dispute with me, I invited him to come and settle it over a bottle of wine (the quality according to the amount involved,) and he never failed to come to reason by the time his tenth glass was empty. 'Sir,' I say to him, 'it is a simple question of figures. I am manager of a theatre, I cannot afford to pay two sets of employes. If I must pay lawyer's fees, I must perforce take it out of the salaries of my actors,' and the argument always prevails. But my present embarrassment is a punishment inflicted upon me for straying from the high road of the legitimate, to the tortuous by-paths of perilous and pernicious Puff. You have been to my theatre, of course. It seats 1,000, and is the neatest, most comfortable house in London, cool in summer, warm in winter; the temple of the muses, the abiding-place of chastity and purity, and never dull. Chumpchops, the elder, built it for me expressly, after designs of my own. It was a success. I always paid him his rent a day in advance, and he fairly worshipped me—and now he sues me, like all the rest! We played high-class dramas and harmless interludes, and my temple had the best of reputations for decency and morality. Mothers patronised me and brought their daughters. My boxes resembled a fair bouquet of roses, all budding, and that brought the young men and the old reprobates of Pall Mall also. But no winks, my dear sir, no ogling, no innuendo! The reputation of the house did not permit it. The Rev. Cream Cheesely attended the performance once a week at my expense. I gave him a stall where all the audience could see him, and he wept in his fine cambric handkerchief so unaffectedly at all the touching passages, that he rendered important service to my establishment. But I sinned against the legitimate, and the Royal Dusthole Theatre is no longer the delight of Cranbourne Alley, and Wyndham Flutter has gone wrong. At any rate he is being fearfully and wonderfully persecuted with writs. The history of the catastrophe is painful, but not long. It was my system to endeavour to add a new play to my repertoire every four months. If a piece succeeded well, and had a long run, I still bought new plays if good ones offered, and held them in reserve.

"One day I received a visit from a certain Israel Clapperclaw, a man with a hooked nose, a hungry eye, and a Jewish aspect, who has the reputation of being the sharpest solicitor of advertisements in the three kingdoms. He can talk as rapidly as Charles Mathews, as persuasively and unceasingly as Mr. Gladstone, and people often gave him contracts to be rid of his tongue.

"I perceive," said Mr. Clapperclaw as he came in, 'I perceive, my dear Flutter, that in spite of your gracious acceptance of my son's drama, you do not find in it all those merits which press it to rehearsal and immediate performance. Now, with your permission, I have a plan which, if you please—'

"Excuse me a moment, Mr. Clapperclaw—your son's drama, I think you said! I no not understand you. Probably—'

"No, no, Mr. Flutter, I do assure you I am not in error. What! the first, and so far as I know, the only drama in the family, and make a mistake about it? Impossible! My son's drama is called *Mary the Betrayed*, or *the Underdone Mutton Chop*, by Gustavus de Rothchild (his modest *non de plume*) and was accepted by you in January of last year."

"Oh, pardon me," said I, reaching the M. S. down from the pigeon-hole in which it rested; 'I could not know that Gustavus de Rothchild was your son, and that you were the author of the author of such an excellent drama.'

"I have that honour."

"It is a good play," I said, 'and, as you will see by the memorandum here on the back of it, the parts are to be written out on the 25th, the first rehearsal is to take place on the 1st, and the initial performance is to come off on the 21st. The play is already cast. Miss Clementina Vere de Vere as Mary.'

"She can't play the heroine, her hair is the wrong shade, she is a brunette, and the part demands a golden blonde," interpolated Clapperclaw.

"Clarkson shall make her a wig," I urged. 'Phipps will play the lover; Plumper will do the villain admirably; and Dossey, as Croaker, the busybody of the piece. There's a cast!'

"Good; and you must send Dossey to me. You remarked the portrait of course. Croaker is taken from me. He is always making a suggestion—like myself,—enriching others, and remaining poor himself. Like me again!"

"But is it right for a son to caricature his father thus?"

"Caricature! sir; it is a photograph! And now I will tell you where the fortune to you comes in. It is a mint; it is worth the Bank of England to you. It is a leading trait in my character—always making a valuable suggestion, always recommending to his friends to do this, to get that, to take this, to try that, and so on. Good! Let him advertise in this way real things. Let him introduce in this way absurd and laughable puffs—but puffs all the same—of the popular nostrums and gimcracks of the day. It is advertisement carried to the sublime! It is Art become the handmaid of Industry! It is Drama turned servant to Patent-Right without ceasing to be Drama! It is your harvest, and I, too, will grow rich upon my twenty-five per cent. commissions, for I will make the bargains, and not a name nor an article must cross the lips of Croaker until the money is in the treasury. The public will be amused, and laugh at what seems to be good fun poked at the advertisers. But, my dear Flutter, the jokes and absurdities will stick in the public memory as no ordinary advertisement would, and the advertisers know this. It is a mint, my dear Flutter."

"And Mr. Clapperclaw went on to elaborate his scheme at great length, and in terms so insidious and fascinating that I consented to try how it would work. Accordingly, when *Mary, the Betrayed*, was put upon the stage, underlying the humours of Croaker were some first-class puffs of articles in popular vogue—puffs for which Clapperclaw secured me excellent pay. The thing took well. The play was good; the scheme 'a hit.' The audiences roared; the puffs became catch-words; the comic newspapers chaffed the various happy thoughts; and the public bought the articles with eagerness. I had 'struck ile,' as the Americans say. Clapperclaw, on the strength of it, bought himself six new suits of clothes, a huge diamond pin, and started a carriage, and a spotted dog to run beneath it. He was in great feather. The quips and cranks of Croaker were in everybody's mouth, and the street boys howled his jests in every alley. There was an immense run on the sewing-machine he named. When one of the characters split his trousers, Croaker implores him to buy the 'Quadruplex Adjustable,' and have it mended, as it were, by magic. Dr. Jalap's Patent Searching Steam Liver Pills (thirteen in the box, and only one shilling) had done such wonders for the alimentary canal that the great de Lesseps had prescribed them for opening the locks of his Suez Canal. Hammersmith's Burglar and Fireproof Safes, he observed, not only kept your money secure, but paid you ten per cent. interest on it! As for the inimitable Bloom of Youth, by Rimmel, he had had to appeal to the law to prevent its manufacture. His wife used it, and it made her so rosy and juvenile that his life was consumed with jealousy, and his hands steeped in crime! He fought sixty duels, killed ten men, was wounded sixteen times in fifteen places, and, finally, the lady got a divorce from him, because he hit her with a poker, and made her wear a thick veil and green goggles. To be brief, Croaker was making all our fortunes, when an atrocious vagary and piece of bad faith on the part of that mercenary rascal Clapperclaw ruined everything in general, and plunged me in particular into this chaotic vortex of the law. As you know, the rivalry between those famous and favourite dentifrices, the Sublime Tooth Paste, of Madame Frangipanni, and the Odorous Odontine, of Bubble, Birst, and Co., is very sharp and persistent. The general impression is, that the articles are identical, and made from the same recipe. Madame Frangipanni was a sister of one of the firm of Bubble, Birst, and Co., and the only difference I could ever discover between the two tooth-powders was that the Sublime Toothpaste was salmon-coloured, while the Odorous Odontine was pink. But, in the effusions which they called advertisements, each party was careful to denounce the other's article as a worthless fraud, a swindle, an abominable injury, put upon a confiding public. Clapperclaw for some time had primed Croaker with devilish ingenuity to hold the scales as evenly as possible between the rival tooth-powderists, puff each alternately, and carefully abstain from abusing either. But Madame Frangipanni, after the popularity of our scheme was assured, resorted to a *coup d'état*. She drove to my office one morning, when she knew Clapperclaw was to be found there, and captured us both. She was a business woman, pretty as an angel, and just eight-and-twenty. She was very polite to me, and ogled Clapperclaw without concealment. She even called the ugly old wretch 'Her sweet friend,' and gave him two or three squeezes. Oh, I assure you, she knew how to make a bargain. She offered us £200 to let Croaker puff the Sublime Toothpaste to the exclusion of all other subjects, and especially the Odorous Odontine, (which she privately assured us contained strychnine) for one month.

"It is not enough," said Clapperclaw, and offered to show her our books. After long haggling we consented to do it for £250, and signed a contract to that effect. She paid down the money and drove away.

"It is £50 too cheap," muttered the old agent, 'but I'll be even with her.'

"Two nights later, when some contracts previously made had expired, Croaker (Dossey) in his famous scene with Bendigo (Plumper) introduced the new 'gag' by deliberately sitting down, taking a set of false teeth from his mouth, brushing them with the Sublime Toothpaste, and replacing them.

"What have you there, Croaker?" asks Bendigo,

"What indeed, but the famous Sublime Toothpaste of Madame Frangipanni, benefactor of the human race. See, with one application the teeth have grown fast. If I were to use it five times the roots of them would grow out through the top of my head. So I must be cautious, since I do not wish to resemble a stag with antlers, in Windsor Forest." (Applause, Sensation. Ladies with false teeth clap handkerchiefs to their mouths). To my surprise and horror Bendigo responds, with a 'gag' not down in the bills, 'My dear sir, how fortunate you are. Yesterday I bought some of the Odorous Odontine and I no sooner used it than my teeth began to fall out.' Croaker (at a loss, the 'cue not prompting him about this 'gag') 'It is not possible.' Bendigo, (*speaks*) 'Oh, I assure you, yes.' He takes a toothbrush and some of the miraculous powder, applies it to his gums, and sure enough, his teeth begin to fall out, one by one, upon the stage. I rushed behind the scenes to arrest this fatal bye-play. As I went on I found Clapperclaw at the wings, laughing and chuckling. 'I told you I would be even with her,' he said; 'this is £50 more. What are you going to do?'

"I rang the curtain down, and turned fiercely on Plumper,

the actor. 'Scoundrel, how dare you do such a thing,' I shouted.

"I didn't do it by my own will, I assure you," he sneered, 'but by your master's orders,' indicating Clapperclaw with his thumb.

"I could not stand any such insolence, and I knocked the fellow down, whereupon Dossey assaulted me, got me down, sat on my body, pulled my nose, and said that I had exacted of his impersonation services which were disgraceful to me, and degrading to the profession. Plumper struck me with his cane, the rest of the company assailed me and Clapperclaw; the police had to be called in, and the performance broke up in a free fight.

"Within a week the various suits commenced. Madame Frangipanni sued me for £500 damages—breach of contract. Bubble, Birst, and Co. sued me for £1,000 damages, for defamation of business. Plumper sued me for assault and battery, and I sued Dossey for the same. Chumpchops the elder claimed £2,000, injury done to his respectable theatre by the turning it into a medium for flash advertisements, and I sued Clapperclaw for a clear £100,000 for ruining my business under false pretences.

"Now you know why I am here. Is it not enough to land a man in Colney Hatch? The doctors say of me as they said of the mother of Sir Roger Tichborne; I have a bad head—a *tête malade*—a—"

He was going on, but I had heard enough. At the name of Tichborne I fled, as I had no desire to have a lunatic's view of that long-winded *cause célèbre*.

"LYNCH" FOR "LYNCH!"

By ARTHUR MATTHISON,

Author of "The Little Hero," &c., &c.

I HEARD a wild story once, out in the West,
Of a trial, where law was derided;
Where the Jury were just the first men round about,
And "Lynch" was the Judge that presided.

The Court was a rood of green turf, hot and dry,
For the fierce summer sun parch'd the valley;
Near the river a tree stood for gallows, if need,
For "Lynch law," out there, didn't dally!

A big *desperado*, part Spaniard, part "Yank,"
Was charg'd with a swift, cruel murder.
The betroth'd of the Mexican youth he had kill'd
Denounced him!—believ'd all who heard her!

For murder was there, redly writ on his face,
Yet he laugh'd (half in scorn, half in fury),
For the Judge was his mate, and what was to fear,
With ten of his friends on the jury!

A lithe, lovely creature, that young Creole girl,
Who, with fast, fiery words, did arraign him;
All her love for her "Juan" transform'd into hate
For this "half-breed" who, ambush'd, had slain him!

She told how this Spaniard had offer'd her love;
How, with terror and scorn she had fled him;
How happy her days with her Juan, her own!
How that soon she had promis'd to wed him!

And she told, shuddering told, how "this coward" had crept
On her love, and—'ere hand could restrain him—
How life he had taken, and "life he must yield!"
How the blood of her lover did stain him!

And her eyes they blaz'd up with a dangerous blaze,
As she told Judge and Jury her story;
His tawny cheek flushing, he, cursing, denied,
Though his knife, with the crime, was yet gory!

Then the Jury consulted—she watch'd every face,
Look'd at him, like a lynx before leaping;
Her wild eyes flash fire, she grinds her white teeth,
Her hand to her girdle is creeping.

"The Jury consulted!" All knew well enough
The verdict had long been decided;
"Not guilty," they said—false verdict—false Court!
False to "Lynch" was the Judge that presided!

For a moment her face droop'd between her brown hands,
Then a shiver of passion ran through her,
And she rose to her full height, a wonderful strength
Seemed to come—whence, who knoweth?—unto her!

She cried—"That's the verdict! Not Guilty!" you say;
Her eyes with her soul's light were glist'ning.
Every tone of her voice broke full and distinct
On the clear summer air that seem'd list'ning.

"I saw the blow struck at my love, by this cur!
Too late saw the sharp blade descending;
'Twas a quick, savage blow, unwarded, undreamt.
His life from my love sudden rending!

"And is this all that you and your justice can do
To the thief who has stolen my treasure,
Who has robbed me of life, for he's robb'd me of love,
Is this, of your law, the full measure?"

"Not Guilty's, the verdict the Jurymen give,"
Said the Judge, "It's the law, I endorse it!
And the sentence now is, that the pris'n'r goes free!
It's the law; and I guess none can cross it!"

With fire ever glowing her eyes deeply burn'd,
Her hand to her girdle stole nearer;
And as the Judge utter'd his hard, cruel words,
Her duty unto her seem'd clearer.

She clutches at something that girdle within—
"Here's my law!" she cries. "Here's my trying!"
A trigger is pulled! a flash! a report!
See! his life blood the meadow is dyeing.

The bullet went home, tore his foul heart in twain,
Amazed sat the Judge on the bench there;
The verdict reversed, true justice was done—
Judge and Jury—that brave, loving wench there!

And still with the same dangerous blaze in her eye—
The six-barrelled pistol held holding—
She passed through the crowd, and no man oppos'd—
Judge and Jury, all silent, beholding.

To the brink of the fast-flowing river she strode,
In the air toss'd the pistol above her,
"My Juan, I come!" leapt the waters within,
And in death sought her Mexican lover!



A FIRESIDE PARTY.—AFTER SIR EDWIN LANDSEER.



Throwing off Discount



Posting the Ledger.



Counter jumping & Shop lifting



A Heavy run on the Bank



Meeting a Bill



Grand handcuff between Prigs and Policemen.
J. Stretch 1876

MY CHEQUE BOOK.

BY HENRY HERSEE.

AMONGST other unconsidered trifles in a neglected drawer, I recently discovered an old cheque-book, and have found food for sweet and bitter fancies in recalling some of the circumstances under which the cheques were given, of which only the counterfoils remain. Sometimes my memory has been at fault. Here is an instance. "27th June, 186—. JAMES HODGKISS, £3 0 0." Who was James Hodgkiss? Why did I pay him £3? I hate to give up conundrums, and at last was able to call up my recollections of James Hodgkiss, and of the circumstances under which he received £3 from me. The particulars may be worth the consideration of those who are apt to undervalue the rather cynical maxim of Talleyrand—"Beware of first impulses; they are generally wrong!"

It was a bright Wednesday morning in the leafy month of June, 186—. There was no performance announced at either of our opera-houses for the evening of that day; the guileless Gye and the meek Mapleson were making holiday; there was no musical performance of sufficient attractiveness to detain me in town; and the merry twitterings of the sooty London sparrows suggested the musical performances of their cleaner relatives among the hedgerows of country lanes, and in the dingles of umbrageous woods. What a chance for a holiday! The blue sky and the brilliant atmosphere produced an exhilarating effect; my heart expanded; I glowed with sympathy for Nature and mankind, and felt myself impelled to treat somebody to something, without loss of time. As is usual with me in such cases, I felt it necessary to select a worthy recipient of my liberality, and my deliberations resulted—as they generally do—in the conviction that none of the candidates whom I mentally reviewed presented such irresistible claims as myself. I therefore resolved to treat myself to a holiday.

The man who takes few holidays, naturally wishes to make the most of them when they arrive; and, if he be a Londoner, is embarrassed by the number and variety of the sources of enjoyment which are at his disposal. He is like the prodigal schoolboy who, resolved to spend his last twopence in pastry, is bewildered by the rival luxuries displayed on the confectioner's counter—balances the merits of the nutritious sausage-roll, the succulent raspberry puff, and the satisfying Bath bun, and, when he has made his final selection, often regrets that his capital was not more judiciously invested. Although I had been over half the churches on the Continent, I knew little of metropolitan church architecture. How about "a day amid the churches of London?" Alas! I remembered that, with few exceptions, the churches of London are carefully locked up on week-days, lest people should become too good. How about "a day at the Polytechnic?" There was rapture in the thought; but I felt a growing thirst for a draught of fresh air, unpolluted by chimney-smoke, and I consulted the advertisements of the river steamers. Amongst them was one which fascinated me. The Firefly steamer would start from London Bridge for Gravesend, calling at "Rosherville Gardens! the place to spend a happy day!"

"The place to spend a happy day!" There was in the form of this announcement a sylvan disregard of grammar, suggestive of pastoral innocence and rural unconventionality; of gentle and perennially happy rustics, with eternal broad grins on their unwrinkled faces, peacefully tending honeysuckles and roses, amid balmy zephyrs laden with the songs of birds. I had never been to Rosherville, and I resolved to go thither at once, wondering at my past obtuseness in so long neglecting the happy certainties there to be found, and only anxious lest that blissful retreat should prove to be overcrowded with "the earth's tired denizens," tardily awakened to the fact that "the place to spend a happy day" could be reached by steamer, at the cost of 2s., return ticket, with no restriction on personal enjoyment, except the stern injunction not to smoke "abaft the funnel," coupled with the mental suffering arising from uncertainty as to what "abaft" can possibly mean? Explaining to my wife and family that I "must go into the City on important business, which would detain me until late in the evening," I slipped out of doors, much commiserated—found a cab at the corner of the street, drove rapidly to that part of the City which is known as London Bridge Wharf, and was soon on the deck of the gallant vessel, teak-built and copper-bottomed, A. I. at Lloyd's, known as the Firefly, Captain Funnell, commander, bound for Gravesend, and calling at Rosherville, "the place to spend a happy day."

The Firefly was crowded with citizens in search of happiness, most of whom seemed bent on getting as much happiness as possible out of the journey down the river, and thus forestalling the perfect bliss awaiting them at Rosherville. There was one portly personage to whom bottled stout was happiness. Before the Firefly left her moorings, he called for a bottle of stout, drank a glassful, put bottle and glass under the seat, looked intently into "the middle of next week" for ten minutes, then brought the bottle and glass from behind his legs, drank another glassful of stout, replaced bottle and glass under the seat, relapsed into meditation; and whenever the bottle became empty lost no time in calling "Steward!" and promptly, though huskily, commanding that functionary to bring "nother bottle stout!" To a majority of the passengers, tobacco smoke was happiness; and pipes were popular. There was the impassible smoker, who smoked incessantly all the way to Rosherville, and all the way back, as if discharging an imperative duty. There was the excitable smoker, who would have smoked incessantly, had he been able to talk and smoke at the same time. He was a muscular Scotchman, with an intelligent face, a broad chest, a sledge-hammer fist, a stentorian voice, and the *cacoethes loquendi*. Surrounded by a few patient sufferers, he laid down the law between his whiffs at the pipe which was grasped by his left hand, while with his right he clutched the arm of his interlocutor. Once in every five minutes the interlocutor had a chance of interlocking. In the heat of argument, the Gael would forget his pipe, and finding—after four or five vindictive sucks of the mouthpiece—that it was extinguished, would say, "Ma pipe's oot again! Just gie me a light?" While he was lighting his pipe, his opponent would profit by the opportunity to "cut in," thus: "You will excuse me, Mr. MacDonald, but I cannot for one moment see how—" but the sentence was doomed to remain unfinished, for Mr. MacDonald, blowing a mighty cloud of smoke from his capacious mouth, always shouted out, "Ye know naething at a' about it! See here, noo,"—and then followed a torrent of oratory which overbore opposition until the neglected pipe again required relighting. There was a pallid youth, with a new meerschaum which he was bent on "colouring," and whose perseverance seemed likely to endanger his constitution. There were a couple of flashily dressed boys, deep in the literature of the music halls, who congratulated each other on the excellence of the "two-penny smokes" with which they poisoned the air. They brought to my recollection an occurrence I once witnessed at Warwick. The local exciseman pounced upon a fellow, who was crying "A cigar and a light for a penny," on the racecourse. Next morning, when brought before the mayor, and charged with selling tobacco without a licence, he produced, as a witness of his innocence, the manufacturer from whom he had purchased the penny cigars. The manufacturer, who rejoiced in a hooked nose and black ringlets, and whose theological views were those entertained by the lineal descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, unblushingly deposed that there was not a particle of tobacco in

the penny cigars, which were made—not to put too fine a point upon it—of rhubarb leaves! My two young friends on the deck of the Firefly were unwittingly patriotic, and were doing their best to promote the prosperity of the British agriculturist and the British manufacturer; but as I object to rhubarb without mania, I moved away to the fore part of the vessel, where I found a group of four vestrymen, smoking the unsophisticated clay pipes of commerce, and discussing the possibilities of a successful invasion of England. No. 1 argued that such an event was impossible. No. 2 maintained the contrary opinion. Nos. 3 and 4 smoked, and said nothing; but probably "thought the more." No. 1 had the best of it for some time, but was ultimately gravelled by No. 2, who resorted to cumulative hypothesis, in this fashion. "You say as it ain't possible. Now, look here, Mr. Figgins. Supposin' as we lost the command of the ocean, and the French, the Proosians, and the Roosians was all to jine agin us?" Mr. Figgins here interposed. "Oh, look here—this is nonsense! Is it likely, as—" He got no farther, for No. 2 interrupted him with "I don't say as it is likely; but I put it to you, Mr. Figgins, as a matter of argument, what should we do if the French, the Proosians, and Roosians *did* invade us?" Mr. Figgins, shrugging his shoulders contemptuously, replied, "Why, o' course, we should be obliged to—to—suck 'em!" a mysterious utterance, which puzzled me considerably, until I came to the conclusion that "suck 'em" was the Figginsian pronunciation of "succumb."

Besides the smokers, there were the flirts, the spooners, and the talkers. There was a giddy young thing of about thirty-two, attired in a white muslin dress, with five crimson bows down the front of it—suggestive of deadly wounds inflicted by five malignant rivals—who before we reached Blackwall had effectually subjugated a flaxen-haired German, whose tender glances were imperfectly obscured by his blue spectacles. There was a sentimental youth, with a green umbrella and a squint, nestling close to an angel in mauve silk,—and furtively clasping her hand beneath an outspread newspaper—the collateral advantages of his visual defect being evident from the fact that when he was really casting sheep's-eyes on his enchantress, he appeared to be looking at the other side of the vessel. There were two married ladies, the younger of whom talked with a volubility worthy of the Clan Mac Ronald, and from whom I derived much enlightenment as to the troubles attendant on maternity, and the nourishment of the infant population, previous to their "cuttin' their first teeth." Loudest of talkers was the nautical youth, his straw hat bound with blue ribbon, who explained the difference between a "brig" and a "barque," called each passing vessel a "craft," and "made out" the names of distant vessels with the aid of a race-glass. He was an abounding joy to me; but I should hold him in more favourable recollection had he not "made out" that the Psyche, of Boulogne, which passed us, was "the Fizzky, of Bolong!"

But it was to the "band" of the Firefly that I owed my chief enjoyment. I have always maintained the claims of "native talent." Here it was. There were four British artists. The fiddler interested me deeply. His attachment to his native soil was attested by the quantity of it which was embedded in his finger-nails; his clothes were shabby; and, with artistic indifference to appearances, he had neglected to shave—perhaps to wash; but there was a sad, piteous look in his thin face, that spoke of the trials which beset the artist—of early hopes disappointed—of sorrows, too bitter to be assuaged by the inward application of alcohol. I have heard better players, but he played in tune, and that was a comfort. It was not his fault that the repertory of the Firefly chiefly consisted of music-hall tunes;—he played them expressively, and if his occasional cadenzas were sometimes indicative of a too exuberant fancy, they were at all events his own, and were certainly not copied from Joachim or Wilhelmj. His three companions failed to interest me. The cornet-à-pistons was a chubby little fellow, whose clothes seemed too small for him, and whose cheeks, when he tried (alas too often!) to overpower the other artists seemed to be stuffed with Norfolk dumplings. His objects appeared to be, to play as loud as possible—to introduce the longest and most inappropriate cadenzas—and to make people understand that he was the most important member of the band. How different, both in artistic refinement and modesty of demeanour, from the great Levi! The harpist was a twiddler; the trombone was a nuisance. He trampled on the laws of art, and "vamped" a series of harmonies composed almost solely of the tonic, dominant, and sub-dominant;—measuring out discords, by the foot and by the yard, with amazing effrontery. Nevertheless, he had his admirers. The multitude are always fascinated by the mysterious evolutions of the trombone-player; and are often as much puzzled by them as were the Japanese Ambassadors, of whom it is recorded that after their first visit to the Grand Opera at Paris they were asked what portion of the performance had impressed them the most powerfully?—whereupon they replied, that they had chiefly enjoyed the wonderful performances of the conjuror who had been seated among the musicians, and who had apparently swallowed yard after yard of brass tubing, without any sign of inconvenience! Dear old Ferdinand Hiller used to relate how a rustic, who came from a distance to a Cologne festival, and for the first time in his life saw a trombone played, as a military band marched along the street, came to the conclusion that there was something the matter with the instrument, as the trombone player was evidently trying in vain to push out the curved end;—and consequently stepped off the pavement, pulled out the lower portion of the trombone, and triumphantly handed it to the horrified performer, saying, "Here it is, sir!" Had that inartistic but well-meaning Teuton been with me, on the deck of the Firefly, I should have bribed him to withdraw the lower extremity of its hateful trombone, and cast it into the silver Thames.

I discoursed with the fiddler on art. As to Richard Wagner's theories, he had no prejudices—never having heard of them; and for the same reason he refrained from offering any decided opinions on the respective merits of Joachim, Wieniawski, and Wilhelmj. He informed me that he had seen better days (which I was disposed to believe)—that he was a coach painter by trade, and had no bigoted antipathy to refreshment in the shape of rum and water. His fiddle, which he told me had cost him five pounds, appeared to me to be dear at that price, but I hesitated to say so. We parted at Rosherville Pier, and as I learned that he would return by the Firefly, calling at Rosherville about 7 p.m., I told him that I should meet him again on the homeward voyage.

If I did not find Rosherville "the place to spend a happy day," possibly the fault was mine. My ideal Arcadia proved to be the reverse of what I had expected, although it was not devoid of charms, and might have been quite satisfactory, if I could have had it all to myself. I was glad when seven o'clock came, and I found myself once more on the deck of the Firefly, which was already strewn with heads and tails of "srimps." The incessant consumption of "srimps," of which almost every passenger had a large supply, engendered thirst, and the alleviation of thirst led to unlooked-for results. The squinting youth quarrelled with his "Mariar," and they sat apart from each other. The giddy young thing in white muslin and wounds transferred her smiles to the nautical young man, at whom the flaxen-haired German glowered from behind his blue spectacles. Mr. Figgins was silent, and drunk. The haughty MacDonald, after his eleventh glass of "cold Scotch," collapsed into a heap, and lay back in a corner,

snoring defiantly; the harpist indulged in "free fantasias," of the freest and most fantastical kind; the cornet-player "caught peas" in his cornet every minute; the trombone-player set the elementary rules of harmony at defiance; but my fiddler, true to his art, and sober as a judge (I am not bound to name the judge), played on with unabated energy. Soon after we passed Greenwich he told me that there would be no more music that night, and that he was going into the steward's room for his bag. A few minutes afterwards, he came on deck, with his beloved fiddle in a green baize bag, and I lost sight of him.

Suddenly, there was a crash! followed by a pitiful wail! and everyone rushed to see what was the matter. There, in the middle of a sympathising crowd, was my friend the fiddler, the impersonation of despair. He had placed his bag on a seat; had inadvertently sat down upon it, and all that remained of his trusty fiddle was a collection of splinters, held together by catgut! A subscription was made for the unlucky artist; but I learned that it barely reached the sum of two pounds. I remembered that I had at home a decent fiddle, which (owing to an accident) I had long been unable to use, and I gave my card to the fiddler, telling him to call on me next morning, which, with grateful tears pouring down his wretched face, he gladly promised to do. Next day, I sought in vain for the fiddle. At length, it was found in the bedroom of my youngest boy, who is strongly given to the study of natural history, but has no soul for music. By means of holes cut in the face of the instrument, and covered with wire, and a couple of doorways similarly contrived in the sides, he had turned it into a cage for white mice! At this moment, the fiddler arrived, and was shown into my study. What was I to do? However fond he might be of natural history, he would probably think a cageful of white mice an unacceptable substitute for the fiddle which I had promised him. I felt I must nerve myself for a sacrifice. I explained to him what had been the fate of the fiddle, and asked him his name, which proved to be James Hodgkiss. To his order I wrote out the cheque for £3 of which I last week found the counterfoil, and the poor fellow departed to buy a new fiddle—so overcome by his emotion, that he could not speak his gratitude otherwise than by tears.

Two months later, after dining at Blackwall, I and some friends embarked on board the last Gravesend "up" steamer. We were too busy in conversation to pay attention to the band, which was playing in a distant part of the vessel. Five minutes after we passed Greenwich there was a crash! a wail! a rush of passengers—and there, in the middle of a sympathising crowd, was my friend Mr. James Hodgkiss, weeping over the remains of a fiddle, upon which he had inadvertently sat! My friend Jones suggested to my friend Brown that we should "make a purse" for the poor fiddler; but my friend Robinson took us aside, and whispered, "Don't let us make fools of ourselves. That fellow breaks a fiddle once a week, and makes a good thing of it. When he has done playing, he goes below; places his fiddle in a cupboard, puts a wretched thing worth five shillings in his bag, goes upon deck—and has a sad accident. Don't spoil his market. It is amusing to see how easily the British public can be gulled; and I have no doubt he finds plenty of fools ready to be imposed upon."

"You don't say so?" said I. I thought that it would be best to say nothing to my friends Brown, Jones, and Robinson about my personal acquaintance with Mr. James Hodgkiss; but had I been able to secure the pleasure of a private interview with him, that British artist would have had a lively time of it, for the space of five minutes. Since that night I have remembered Talleyrand's maxim, "Beware of first impulses. They are generally wrong!"

A LIVELY LUNATIC.

BY H. SAVILE CLARKE.

WHEN the news arrived that the good ship "Ladybird" was lost at sea with all hands, and that young Frank Raeburn, who was on board, was consequently drowned, all the world (that is to say, all Raeburn) knew what would become of the Raeburn estate. Poor Frank was the last heir in the main line, and he was coming home to claim his inheritance when the perfidious ocean swallowed him up. According to his father's will, the estate went to a distant cousin, who immediately announced his intention of selling it, as he hated the country.

It was a fine estate, with a capital house on it, and many other advantages "too numerous to mention," as an auctioneer would say; but when the said cousin expressed his intention of selling it, he omitted to take a certain person into his calculations.

That person was Mr. Jeremiah Bollop. Similarly, when Tom Lindsay, a young surgeon, who had come to settle in Raeburn, made up his mind that Rose Morton would be a capital wife for a doctor, he, too, calculated without Mr. J. Bollop, for Rose happened to be that individual's niece, and, among his many prejudices, Mr. Bollop had an inveterate hatred of doctors.

That hatred arose from his having once bestowed a whole bottle of lotion prescribed for himself upon a favourite dog, which died in twenty minutes, the said lotion being only for outward application. Mr. Bollop, who was not of a logical turn of mind, arguing therefrom that if he had rubbed on the stuff it would have killed him. The inference was unfair to the profession, but the prejudice remained.

To return, however to the efforts to get rid of the Raeburn estate. The property would not sell, simply because Mr. Bollop was the agent, who had served the Raeburns for years, and who, having made up his mind, by some process known only to himself, that Frank Raeburn was not dead, artfully prevented any intending purchaser coming to terms for the house and land.

The cousin, who desired to sell, could not understand how it was that so many would-be purchasers held back after they had once seen the house; but then he did not know of the series of outrageous falsehoods with which the unscrupulous Bollop deluded anyone who came near the place. To one hypochondriacal old gentleman, he abused the drains; to a nervous spinster lady, he averred on his oath that the house was haunted, and painted such a vivid picture of the ghost, that she dreamt of it for months afterwards. There was capital shooting, but he told a sportsman who came to look after it that there was not a bird on the place. In short, he gave Raeburn such a bad character, that no one would buy it, and, much to the chagrin of the cousin who inherited it, the estate remained unsold and unlet up to the time when our story begins, about two years after the news of Frank Raeburn's death.

It must be added that, even had the cousin found out Mr. Bollop's machinations, he could hardly have put a stop to them, for the irrepressible agent was a fixture on the estate, Frank Raeburn's father having given him the cottage and land he occupied not far from the Manor House.

Affairs were in this position when Dr. Tom, going his rounds in the village, happened, as was not unfrequently the case, to meet Miss Rose taking a walk in the same direction. She looked so bright and happy, that Tom was quite surprised, and said, as soon as he came up to her, "Well, Rosie, what makes you look so pleased? Has the old Griffin come round yet?"

"It's just as well the Griffin doesn't hear you, sir," said Rose, "or I'm sure he would never come round; but I've got some news for you."

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The meeting between Rolf and Ulfar was anything but pleasant. The former, stupefied, by grief and consternation, could only be roused from a state of painful bewilderment, into fits of rage, despair, and madness. From each of these he sank back again into the same dull condition of mind in which Ulfar had found him. As for Ulfar himself, the loss of his bride affected him in a manner which all who had previously known him deemed strange. Instead of lashing him to anger, it seemed to have plunged him in a gloomy inaction wonderfully at variance with his fiery nature. Even Rolf, when his scattered senses had been drawn a little closer together, was surprised by Ulfar's moody silence. Instead of burning to pursue and punish the ruffianly Svend, he gave but a sad, desponding assent to Rolf's proposal that chase should instantly be given to the Norwegian pirate's galley. Nevertheless, he quickly prepared himself to accompany Rolf, and an armed body of retainers soon put to sea under the command of Rolf and Ulfar.

A few hours, for the winds were favourable, sufficed to transport this force from the North Danish coast to a point on the shore of the fiord that divides the southern coast of Norway. But the fighting men were landed in an extremely gruesome condition, having suffered from the strange presence of a most extraordinary chill, that seemed to surround and to proceed from the body of Snag the henchman. However, being a well-seasoned band of warriors, they recovered their natural temperature as soon as they were encamped near Svend's ramparts; the miserable Snag withdrawing himself despondingly from their midst.

Knowing that the force led by Rolf and Ulfar would soon be masters of the situation, Svend took the deer by the antlers, to use a Scandinavian proverb of great antiquity, and sent a herald to challenge either of these chiefs to single combat. Amazed indeed was Rolf to find that this appeal to arms did not evoke any warm response from Ulfar.

"Son," said the elder chieftain, "can it be that thy sufferings have unmanned thee? If so, let my feeble arm nerve itself once again for the battle. Remain thou in thy tent, while the aged Rolf encounters the ruthless foe who hath robbed him of his child."

This, of course, was more than Ulfar could withstand. "Bear to Svend the defiance of Ulfar," were his words to the herald. "Tell thy lord his challenge is accepted by one who will conquer or die."

"My master, the mighty Svend, lord of these hills, bids me also declare that he makes the hand of his captive, the beauteous Thyra, the prize to be decided by this combat," said the herald. "Be it so," answered Ulfar, with an effort to recal his proud spirit, which never till this time had failed him.

In due course the lists were prepared in front of Svend's castle. Behold the men at arms and the archers of both sides opposed in mute array. Behold the castle walls glowing in the golden light of a summer eve. Behold the Lady Thyra and her faithful attendant, Kerstin, waving their handkerchiefs from the turret, to encourage the champion of beauty and virtue. Behold, in short, everything that imagination can conjure up as needful to the completion of this exciting picture.

I further invite you to behold with your mind's eye the terrific combat which presently ensued between Ulfar and Svend. There are no such combats now-a-days. Cut and thrust, thrust and cut; cut, hack, thrust, and parry. One, two, three, over; one, two, three, under; one, two, three, four, spin round; one, two, three, four, long sweeping cut at the legs, avoided by a jump; one, two, three, over; one, two, three, under; and so on, *da capo*, striking fire from the sword-blades at every clash. That is the sort of fighting we shall never see again. Svend and Ulfar went at it and kept at it, tooth and nail, till they were both out of breath; and then, as token of defeat, Svend staggered, fell to the ground, raised himself on his left elbow, and guarded his head with the sword which he still held firmly in his gauntleted right hand. Tableau.

"Yield thee, recreant," cries Ulfar, setting his foot upon the panting and prostrate Svend. "Deliver the Lady Thyra from thy abhorred dungeon, or die the death," and he pointed his broadsword at Svend's throat.

As a matter of fact, Svend had already yielded; and as all the soldiers in the pay of that marauder were on parade outside the castle, there was nothing whatever to prevent the captives from walking out as soon as they chose to do so.

But while the victorious Ulfar was standing in the attitude I have described, one of Svend's bowmen sent an arrow flying at the conqueror. It missed his breast, but went through the fleshy part of his left arm and stuck there. Quitting his recumbent foe, Ulfar strode towards Rolf, for assistance in withdrawing the arrow, and when their attention was absorbed by this surgical operation, the treacherous Svend arose and made a rush with his sword at the wounded Dane.

Ulfar perceived the attack in time to meet it effectually. He had forborne, up to this moment, to use the terrible power with which he had been cursed by the vengeful Druda. But now, in fighting phrase, he put in his left; and though his delivery from the injured arm, on Svend's proboscis was a mere tap, not even drawing the claret, it settled the Norway Slasher's business. In conformity with the customs of his age and country, Svend's funeral was ruggedly grand.

Now, during the short captivity of Thyra and Kerstin, they had simultaneously dreamed a beautiful dream. In the vision which appeared to both of them, Freyr, a Scandinavian deity connected with sunshine, gave them personally to understand that they were under his especial care. They were to invoke his aid, he informed them, whenever they might be in trouble, need, or distress. Having assured them of his powerful protection, he smiled upon them both and disappeared. Of course, on awakening, mistress and maid compared notes, and were resolving to call at once upon the name of the sun-god, when one of Druda's frost-spirits, who had been hovering mischievously near, spell-bound them both, so that for the life of them they could not remember the name they wanted to pronounce. You will remember that Cassim Baba was placed in a similar quandary when he wanted to get out of the robbers' cave.

What would you have, then? Novelty? Originality? Indeed, I am not the author that shall give you these. I tell you a tale which I myself have had told me half a dozen times in half a dozen different ways. It pleases me to remember it as it pleases you to think sometimes of Ali Baba and his "Open Sesame." I wish I could get at the real old original legend of Ulfar; and yet, when we laugh at a farce do we much care that it is as old as Patelin? Twelve years ago or more I stood with a party of Danish friends on a hill or cliff near Elsinore, overlooking the Sound. We had been to look at Hamlet's or Amlet's grave. Was there ever a Hamlet or Amlet, I wonder? If there was, only imagine how very unlike an eminent tragedian he must have looked! How many versions of the story of Hamlet or Amlet had there been, think you, before Shakspeare took the legend for the plot of a splendid metaphysical play? Well, as we stood on Odinshoe, a mound of many fables, the story of Ulfar came to be discussed. Something rather like it had been the scheme of one of Mr. Bournonville's delightful saga-ballets at the Copenhagen Opera House. Bless me, said I, that story was read to me from "the Olio" when I was ever such a little child; and Mr. Buckstone founded on it an Easter melodrama, which was brought out at Drury Lane in the year One. I saw Wallack in it, and Harley,

and Younge, and Miss Crawford, and Mrs. Waylett. Only think!

When Ulfar of the Frozen Hand had slain the treacherous and ruffianly Svend, no obstacle remained to the release of Thyra; so for a while her inability to invoke the sun-god Freyr by name was not of much consequence. The fatal hand had been concealed by Ulfar from the sight as well as possible touch of his friends; and there had been the better excuse for wrapping it in a scarf since an arrow wound had been inflicted on the arm to which that accursed hand belonged. But the meeting with Thyra was an event which the unfortunate Ulfar dreaded exceedingly. Poor Kerstin had been almost frozen to death already, by Snag's frigid salutations; and the moment seemed to be drawing near when master and man must relinquish all further attempt to keep their terrible secret. It was rather more practicable, indeed, for Ulfar to greet his betrothed than for Snag and Kerstin to bill and coo; for, with great care, the Frozen Hand might be safely muffled up; whereas, there could be no means of taking the chill off Snag.

Rolf, pardonably desirous of getting his daughter married and settled, hastened on the nuptials. There stood, in those old days, a Temple of Odin, on the height which I have parenthetically mentioned. In that Temple was it that the simple marriage-rites were to be performed by the high priest, assisted by other reverend gentlemen of the established Scandinavian idolatry. Ulfar's desperation had now almost assumed the character of indifference. Fate had made him her vassal. Ulfar the Viking had not spirit left to say Bo to a goose.

It was a lovely midsummer day when Ulfar and his bride stood at the rough-hewn altar-stone of Odin's Temple. "Son," said the high priest, whose snow-white beard, descending to his girdle, gave him a most picturesquely venerable appearance, "Stretch forth thy left hand and take thy bride, after the custom of Odin's children."

"With my good right hand," said Ulfar, "will I wed the beauteous Thyra,"—but, as he spoke, a horrible noise was heard, like that with which Druda's wrath had been signalled in the Frozen Realms; and behold, Druda herself stood among the wedding guests.

"I am here, Ulfar," said she, "unbidden. I am here to witness thy espousal with the daughter of the pirate Rolf. Come, come; look not appalled at my presence. Give me thy hand—thy left hand, Ulfar. Nay! Thou canst not deny me. 'Tis mine to bestow; and thus, thus, I close it on the hand of her thou lovest."

But at this moment, Thyra remembered the name she had been made by sorcery to forget. "Freyr," she cried; "Freyr, god of the sun, pity and aid us now!" For though Thyra could imagine no possible harm in holding Ulfar's left hand, she could yet form a shrewd guess that Druda somehow meant mischief.

With an unearthly shriek, the Witch of the Frozen Sea tossed up her arms, as in an agony of baffled rage, and vanished in a clap of thunder. In her place stood the mild yet powerful sun-god Freyr.

And so, all ended well. I wish it were the same with every story in my own experience; and that it may be so with any love-tale peculiarly affecting the reader.

A GHOST AT THE CLUB.

By A. H. WALL.

THERE was, some two, or three, years ago, in a little, old, out-of-the-way North of England town, an antique tavern, known as the Black Jack. Merely a long, low cottage, with walls of unhewn stones, roughly cemented together, rising no higher than a man could reach. But its thatched roof was a very lofty affair; and it had a large garden, a goodly orchard, and a fair share of sheds and outbuildings, in its rear.

Connected with this tavern was a certain club, which the rustic tipplers of the town held in high esteem. It was but a song-singing, story-telling, gossiping, old club, constituted by just such regular meetings and convivial customs as we find traces of in the bacchanalian poetry of ancient Greece and Rome, and, indeed, in the literature of all ages and countries, but it was very old, almost as old, perhaps, as the Black Jack itself. Fathers, sons, grandsons, and great-great-grandsons had in turn occupied the Black Jack's stout oaken settles, forms, and clumsy chairs, as members of this club. You will therefore understand that the stories they told were mainly of a traditionary kind, dealing with events of local importance, which might otherwise have been forgotten, preserving many anecdotes of local oddities, favourites, and celebrities. The terrible doings of Paul Jones, "the Pirate," on the neighbouring coast were talked of at these meetings, as if they were things within everybody's remembrance, and the terrors of the first "Bonaparte's projected invasion" appeared to have been of yesterday. One old man, repeating his great-grandfather's remembrances, for all the world as if they were his own, loved to dwell upon the daring adventures of a "Captain Jack," who won fame as a Cavalier in the reign of Charles I., and another, when the howling wind and driving rain gave increased zest to the fire-side glow, and the night was unusually wild and stormy, would be tolerably sure to remember and to tell his tale of how a ghost visited the club, and "sat in that very chair you are now in, sir!" which story, with your permission, I am about to repeat.

CHAPTER I.

Mary Dormer had at last got a sweetheart to her liking, in the person of Johnny Hawes. She was a sensible, generous, affectionate, high-spirited girl, rosy of cheek and bright of eye, with teeth as white and regular as the hackneyed "rows of pearls" we have all heard so much about. She had refused half the young bachelors of the town, and her age was twenty-two. It was a sight to rejoice in when you perceived her in her father's field, wearing her bonnet with the front behind to shelter her from the sun's rays, handling hoe or rake with a vigour of action which did not in the least detract from its gracefulness, singing the while with a bird-like sweetness of voice, and lending the jog-trot old ballads she delighted in a temporary charm which was far from being their own. A hard-working, contented, estimable, young woman was Mary, commonly called Polly, Dormer, and a lucky fellow was Johnny Hawes to win the heart of such a loving and loveable little creature.

But the course of true love, as Shakspeare said, and as you may have heard before, never yet ran smooth!

Old Job Dormer, Mary's father, was an enthusiastic believer in the ancient creed which denounced the English Bible as a highly improper and mischievous book in any hands but those of a priest properly trained to understand and explain it. He would often dwell upon "the good old times," when monasteries were the homes of the houseless, where, as he would proudly assert, the hungry were fed, the naked clothed, the ignorant taught, and the penitent protected and redeemed, as they never had been since. He longed for a return of those venerable times when—of course, purely in consequence of "Our Blessed Lady's Psalter" being "the only Bible for the poor"—a bushel of corn used to be bought for fourteen pence, and forty eggs were sold for a penny. Old Job Dormer would listen to nothing that threatened to explain these things; but with the persistency of that oldest inhab-

itant who denounced the building of Tenterden Church steeple as the origin of the Goodwin Sands, would insist upon regarding such things as cause and effect. "I don't want argument," old Job would say, "I want facts," and he would triumphantly add, "There they are!" On the other hand, Barnaby Hawes, Johnny's father, was, sternly and strictly, a Protestant, who spent his Sundays wandering amongst the surrounding villages as an outdoor preacher. He regarded the Papists' creed with horror and dismay, and denounced the Pope and all his works as heartily as he renounced the devil.

Strange to say, despite these great differences of feeling and opinion, old Job and Barnaby were the fastest and best of friends. They had been dear to each other as companions at school, and it is not easy to escape from the strong likings of boyhood, which have grown with time up to manhood, and taken firm root in mutual respect and affection. When crops failed and trouble fell upon him, Barnaby invariably sought Job; and when trade was bad and debts hard to collect, Job, who was a tradesman, always came with his anxious fears to consult friend Barnaby, the farmer. They were the two oldest members of the Black Jack Club—Rule 5 of which tabooed politics and religion as subjects of discussion—and they seldom failed to go to or come from it together.

Now when Johnny and Polly discovered they were so dear to one another, that neither could entertain the mere thought of parting without getting a lump in the throat and tears in the eyes—a fact which was made known when John's father once talked vaguely about emigrating in search of brighter fortune—these young folks grew a little awkward and shy in their intercourse. She took to blushing and looking away from his face when she spoke, and he experienced a novel difficulty in finding something to talk to her about. And yet, it is a remarkable fact, that this silly young couple were nevertheless more frequently together than they had ever been before, when he was full of merry talk, and she, looking him full and fairly in the face, saucily gave back jest for jest, or talked of the common-place every day events of the week in a common-place every day way.

Thus stood matters when the club, assembling on a usual night of meeting in the winter of 1832, found one of the two arm-chairs specially set apart in the spacious chimney-corner as belonging by right to the two oldest members, for the first time during many years, empty. It was old Job Dormer's. The club talked dismally of him, for the apothecary—who belonged to the club—had said that the priest and his old friend Barnaby were with him when he left his bedside, and that the good old man couldn't possibly last many days. Job, however, lingered for weeks, and, as the meeting nights came and went, said on each such occasion, how sorely he regretted his absence from pipe and glass and his cosy place in the chimney corner of the old Black Jack.

CHAPTER II.

The other day, in connection with a police-court affair, it was said by a daily contemporary that it was as criminal in the eye of the law to hasten approaching death by terror, as to kill by sudden blow a person in the full vigour of health and strength. If so, that stern, dark man, the Romish priest, as he stood beside the bedside of dying Job Dormer, was terribly guilty. He had been telling, in his hard, inflexible voice, of Mary's acknowledged love for, and intention to marry, a heretic; and in an agony of passionate grief and horror, which surely expedited his end, Job had sent for his daughter and entreated, as if for more than life, health, or present happiness, that she would conquer such wicked love, and abandon her dreadful intention. It was a marriage to which, living or dead, he could never consent!

In the gathering gloom of that dull winter evening those three white faces were terribly distinct. Job had just concluded his wild appeal, and had fallen back upon his pillow gasping for breath; his eyes fixed imploringly upon his daughter's face; his thin, tremblingly eager hand outstretched towards her. Mary, unable to speak, stood like one suddenly stricken into stone; so pale, so still; her hand clutching her dress, at the throat.

Even in the eyes of the priest there were tears, as he recognised the torture his performance of a painful duty had inflicted. His husky voice was the first to break the solemn silence, for neither Mary nor her father were capable of immediate speech. He dwelt sternly, although his tears still flowed, upon the enormity of the crime she would commit in refusing a dying and beloved father that obedience which she owed him, as a solemn duty; urged the undoubted right he himself had, as her spiritual pastor, to be her guide, and to guard her soul from the horror of a deadly sin; and then, sinking his voice to tones of mournful tenderness, he pleaded the cause of their struggling creed, until at length the wretched Mary's head rested lightly upon the shoulder of her father, and in a scarcely audible voice, she gave the oath her priest exacted, and sealed it with a kiss upon her parent's lips. Helpless, utterly desolate, and soon to be as utterly alone, she went out from the darkening room into a midnight which could never know dawning. Straightway she wrote a tear-stained, scarcely intelligible letter to her abandoned lover, explaining the disastrous necessity which had suddenly arisen for their parting, and begging that, out of love, and out of compassion, he would not come to see her any more. She sent that note by hand; and half an hour after, under the dark trees, at the end of the garden, where the feathery snow-flakes were whirling actively and silently down, she was in her lover's arms, with her head upon his breast, sobbing as if her heart would burst. It was to be their final meeting, she said, and for the first and last time she badly—so badly—wanted to confess to him that her whole heart was his, and always had been, and ever would be, all through the dreary pathway of her coming life, for she could never love again. Johnny was a sturdy young fellow, full of pride in his manly powers of endurance. But this blow was too severe a test. His tears fell with the snow-flakes upon his darling's uncovered head, fast as her own, and he sobbed "I do believe that I shall never smile again—my heart is broken, lass. It has broken my heart!" And when the time for parting had come, and poor Mary's teeth were chattering with the cold, he showered passionate kisses upon her lips, her cheeks, her chin and forehead, upon her poor, swollen, inflamed, and blood-shot eyes, and upon her silky hair; as he strained her to him so tightly that she could scarcely breathe, bade life and love at once a last farewell; and in an ecstasy of desperate grief, suddenly released her, bounding away into the darkness with a cry of agony that pierced her heart like the sudden thrust of a knife.

She heard with renewed grief that all that bitter night he was from home, out in the keen icy wind and falling snow; that when in the early morning he returned to his father's house haggard and pale, and went straight to his room, he fastened the door; and neither for his father's commands, nor his mother's entreaties, nor for food nor drink, would open it. This she heard when with more than usual gravity and solemnity Mr. Barnaby Hawes paid his usual visit, and with such an expression of tender pity in his voice when he spoke to her as she had never before heard from him, went upstairs to the bedside of his poor old dying friend, her father. And there was a strange scene! Barnaby had come to plead with the dying for the life of his only son, firmly believing that Job alone could save it. The boy was sick, and daily growing worse; refused nourishment, wished only to die. He pleaded in



REYNARD'S CHRISTMAS DINNER.—DRAWN BY W. CRANSTON.



A PAIR OF CRUTCHES.—DRAWN BY MONTBARD.

vain. The dying man spoke with tender affection to his old friend, shed tears and consoled with him, but was grimly resolute in holding Mary to her vow.

Then for the first time in all their long lives these two old men drifted into a fierce religious controversy, in the midst of which the priest appeared, and sat down stern, watchful, and silent. Their voices, low and tremulous at first, soon grew loud with excitement, and their words, from being slow and hesitating, grew into a torrent of hurried eloquence. Each spoke plainly, and when the priest interposed to stop so unseemly an exhibition, both were defiant, and hot for renewed attacks. A moment after every trace of anger had gone. The tears rolled down their aged cheeks, their hands were clasped, and they spoke of *auld lang syne* with emotions intensely affectionate and sad, of their school-days, of their manhood, and then once more of their children's blighted lives.

"They will never be happy again," sighed Barnaby; but Job, although he echoed the sigh, was silent. Then said Barnaby:—"Johnny was always a favourite with you, Job (the dying man nodded). Will you promise me here, in the presence of this gentleman, one thing. My poor boy believes that after death we are permitted to revisit earth whenever by so doing we may serve the suffering and innocent. It will not be all dark with him if I can tell him, out of love for me and compassion for him, you granted this request."

"Name it, Barnaby," said Job, faintly, with a look of curiosity and a languid smile.

"It is this. That if you should die, and in a future life should learn that the creed you have so faithfully and conscientiously clung to is false, that you will, if permitted, come back to us; and that your presence shall be accepted as the sign by which Mary is released from her vow."

The priest eyed Barnaby suspiciously, and glanced with the same expression towards Job, who slowly shook his head as he stretched out his hand, saying:—"I know your credulity and your sincerity, dear Barnaby; you really believe that if I give this promise you will see me after death. 'Tis a poor vain hope, but, for all that, the promise is yours; and I will pray heartily that the hope it may give Johnny will lighten his great trouble, and help him speedily through it. I shall be praying all night long, and your name will be on my lips with his and with hers—poor things—poor things! Come early in the morning. Good-bye, and God bless you."

CHAPTER III.

An old nurse had been hired to attend poor Job Dormer, and her name was Margaret Brewer, for Mary herself had become ill, and was no longer fit for sick-room duties. Old Margery, as she was called, had overheard the curious promise Job had made Barnaby, and she had talked about it to the neighbours, and so, when the club-night had once more arrived, it became the subject of general conversation amongst the members. Various opinions were expressed, and a discussion arose which ended in the telling of a large number of grisly ghost stories, for the truth and reality of which there were those present who would readily enough pledge their word and honour. As the night wore on, a fierce storm of sleet and hail came, which the savage wind drove against the quivering little casements of the Black Jack in angry gusts. It was late when Barnaby arrived, wet through, to say that he had called, on his way, at Job's house, which was at the other end of the field beyond the tavern orchard, to report that his poor friend could scarcely outlast the night, and that he desired to be heartily remembered to all the dear old friends and companions he would never see again.

The last and best of the old ghost stories had just been re-told, and they were all quietly puffing at their pipes, and thinking about it, when the clock, making a death-like rattle in its wooden throat, amidst profound silence, indicated its intention of striking the midnight hour, after which it was the custom of the club to break up. At that instant the door opened, and every eye was turned towards it, and every jaw fell, and all eyes became distended, and down every backbone crept an icy chill!

There, in the darkness, outside the door, dimly but plainly visible, clothed from top to toe in white, stood the ghostly form of old Job Dormer, whom half an hour ago Barnaby Hawes had left at the point of death! The figure came noiselessly into the room, every soul drawing back to let it pass, went to the empty chair it had occupied in life, sat down in it, and hearing the clock looked up at it, opened its lips as if it would speak, shook its ghastly head, and, as the last stroke sounded the hour, went out as it came in, untouched and unspoken to!

Barnaby was the first to utter a word, and he only said, "Thank God!"

It was ascertained on the following morning that Job had died at exactly half-past eleven o'clock on the previous night in the presence of Margery Brewer!

Here, then, was a genuine ghost story about which there could be no possible mistake. It spread all through the country, and was preserved in all the local newspapers. It was taken up by Protestant preachers in their pulpits, and the materialistic disbelievers who scoffed at it, making inquiries on the spot, became startled and confounded. For years afterwards it was a famous club story for stormy winter nights, at the old Black Jack. Johnny and Polly were united in consequence of it, and lived happily with a large family of boys and girls, in the very home Job had died in, to the intense annoyance of the priest, who utterly discredited the entire affair. Theirs was a very happy home, and Polly often thought, with a full heart and a tearful eye, of what her life might have been had the ghost of her poor old father never returned to pay a parting visit to his old cronies of the Black Jack Club. Job's ghost never came again, however; and, after all, the priest was right.

A few months ago old Margery Brewer died, and before doing so she told the apothecary who attended her that she had something on her conscience, which something was this:—When she was keeping watch by old Mr. Job Dormer's death-bed, towards midnight she fell fast asleep, and, waking up, in a strong, icy draught, found the bed empty, and the chamber-door wide open. For a moment she feared that, becoming delirious, her patient had got up and thrown himself from the window; for that gust of wind, by which she had been aroused, had forced open the casement. Too terrified to know what to do, she began to cry and wring her hands, when, exactly as the clock below was striking midnight, Job, in his night-dress, with a sheet pulled over his head, shivering with cold, and drenched with rain, re-entered the room, went quietly to bed, and breathed his last. When she had sufficiently recovered herself Margery went to the bedside only to find him dead. Considering her falling asleep as the cause of her patient's death, she had purposely mis-stated the time of his decease. It was not Job's ghost, but Job himself who had visited the club thus strangely. In his last moments he had thought of the meeting, and with that desire to rise and walk, which is common with dying persons, he had determined to attend it. Perceiving, as he took his seat, that the time at which the members parted had arrived, he had got up, as he usually did, and had gone straight home to bed.

AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY.

BY HARRIET FISHER.

ABOUT the close of the year 1813, an orphan family of young people were living in the town of Northenden, then a far different place from the busy city of to-day. The river, which now flows black as ink between high ranks of mills and warehouses, was not then pent within such narrow bounds, nor had it yet attained its present sooty hue. There were even paths beside its banks where the rushes and osiers grew, and tall trees made a pleasant shade at noon.

Not far from the river, but yet almost in the heart of the town lived the family before mentioned. Their story was not an uncommon one then, but is, perhaps, even more sadly common now. Born and reared in affluence, the death of their father about five years before the occurrence of the events here related, under distressing circumstances caused by unexpected commercial reverses, left a comparatively trifling sum to stand between his children and absolute destitution.

Unfortunately, too, these children were, all but the two youngest, daughters. It had been a comfort to the dying man that at least two of his girls had prospects of some day resuming the position which they had formerly held. Esther, the eldest, was engaged to a young man with plenty of talent and energy, but without fortune, which, however, he was determined to achieve, and had left Northenden for London with that object a few months before. Possibly the father's consent to their engagement would not have been so freely given, but for the condition in which he knew his affairs to be. The third girl, Dorothy, the prettiest, pleasantest, and cleverest of the family, had plunged into the joys and sorrows of love and a betrothal at the very premature age of fifteen. A boy and girl attachment had sprung up between her and young Walter Mayburn, aged eighteen. Young Mayburn belonged to a rich family, and his own prospects were brilliant, so that, he himself being an old friend and favourite, Mr. Payne died happy in the belief that at least Dorothy would be spared the trials in store for her sisters.

After Mr. Payne's death made the condition of his affairs public property, Walter Mayburn neither came nor wrote to Dorothy Payne again. He had mercenary relatives, who persuaded him that Dorothy had known of their impending poverty, and only cared for him as a means of escaping it. Dorothy, however, did not break her heart. She was a high-spirited girl, and had loved him with all the thoroughness of her nature. Nevertheless, there was still one little weak spot in her heart; she would not burn the half-dozen letters she had received from him. In time, however, she ceased to read them, and they lay apparently forgotten in her little workbox.

So passed a period of five years, Esther was still unmarried, although her lover was now in a position to provide her with a home. Dorothy had another lover, and Margaret, the hitherto unnamed second sister, had decided that something must be done to add to their scanty means, as there were still little Emma and the two boys to be educated, and although she was always sure of the assistance of her married sisters, still she felt that upon her shoulders the chief burden would fall. After much consideration, Margaret decided upon keeping a school.

During the summer and early autumn, it had not been unusual for either Esther or Dorothy to walk out to Sandford, and spend a night or two with their sister. The advent of winter, however, had made the roads bad; but, as the sisters, who were closely attached, did not like to give up the intercourse, it became the habit of Dorothy's new lover, Dr. Aldred, to drive one or the other out and home again.

He had promised to do so on a certain memorable evening in November, when Dorothy had arranged to accompany him; but something had evidently detained him. It grew dark and foggy, and the doctor's gig had not passed their door. The family took their early tea—earlier than usual—for Esther was going to sit with a sick friend a few doors away, and was anxious to be with her.

"If William comes now," she said to Dorothy, "you will not think of driving out to-night."

"Of course not," replied the younger sister, "he can drive me to-morrow morning instead."

Esther departed; and, after a dull, unsettled evening, Dorothy sent the children to bed, and sat down to her work. She was not exactly uneasy about her betrothed; his profession made his coming and going so very uncertain, that she was quite accustomed to these disappointments, but this last one produced in her breast a feeling of unaccountable depression. She went to the window and looked out. The fog thickened. It was impossible to clearly discern objects at the opposite side of the street, where her lover lived. She could not tell whether or not he had come home. She returned to her work and looked at the clock, it was only a few minutes after eight, Esther would not return until ten, William would be sure to come in before bed-time—he always did—she would run upstairs for some more work. While she was in the upper room she heard the handle of the front-door turned.

"Ah, there is William," said Dorothy to herself, "well, he may wait; he has made me wait," but the smile on her face belied the petulance of the half-spoken words.

She found the work, ran down stairs, and opened the door. A tall man stood by the table. He turned as she ran forward and looked up sunnily into her lover's dark face.

The morning broke, as the night had fallen, in fog and gloom. Esther was, as usual, up betimes, and went into the little parlour to dust and arrange it before the morning meal. While thus occupied she chanced upon a scrap of paper lying on the table. On examination this proved to be a tax-paper, upon which some one had pencilled a few careless words—"for lack of thought." Esther put it aside impatiently, saying to herself, "Dorothy is always scribbling, but she might have found another piece of paper; it will look so foolish to return this all written over!" As the morning advanced a little the fog became slightly less dense, Esther could see across the road, and dimly perceived the doctor's gig standing by his door. "William is off early," she thought, "that he may be sooner ready to drive Dorothy."

The children had now come down, and they drew round the breakfast-table.

"What makes Dorothy so late?" asked Esther.

"Dorothy is not at home," said Emma, who was her sister's bed-fellow. "She went last night to see Margaret."

"How do you know?" said Esther, quickly.

"She came up before I was asleep, and I heard her say William had come; indeed, I heard him come in, and she ran down. And when I awoke this morning she was not there, so she must have gone to Sandford," said the little girl.

"How foolish," cried Esther, "to drive out there in the fog! However, they must have arrived safely, for William's gig is standing at his door," and Esther dismissed the subject.

The day passed quietly. The fog cleared off a little, but was followed by the beginning of a frost, which is historical. A frost which ruined Napoleon's expedition to Russia, and was the turning point of that wonderful man's fortunes. A frost, the duration and intensity of which, has rarely been equalled in Europe.

Evening was near when Margaret arrived and was asked the question

"Where is Dorothy? Has she not come back with you?" "Of course not; how can she be? She did not come last night; and, indeed, it was not fit, and I came straight in here."

"Then where is she?"

None present could answer. Esther sped to the doctor's. He was still out, but his servant told her he had not been late the night before. He had been across to bid his sweetheart good night, but had not stayed longer than the usual half hour. She came back, but had not long to wait. In about half an hour William Aldred walked in; he looked pale and somewhat weary, but there was otherwise nothing unusual in his aspect. Esther hurriedly told her tale, ending it with the question "Where is Dorothy?"

"How do I know?" was the sullen answer.

"But what do you know? You must know something. Did you and she quarrel last night, William Aldred? Where is she?"

"I tell you I don't know. Perhaps with her lover, Mr. Walter Mayburn."

"What do you mean?" she gasped.

"I mean that your sister Dorothy deceived me; and—and—I only found it out last night."

"Deceived you! She was incapable of deception. You knew she had been engaged to Walter Mayburn; but then they were mere children."

"Engaged—yes; but I did not know until—until—I read the letters in her workbox."

Esther gazed at him for a few moments, and then said, with a painful effort: "Do you dare, sir, to impeach Dorothy's—my sister's—honour?"

A sneer was his answer. "The letters leave no ground for doubt," he said.

Esther was speechless; not so Margaret.

"Did you take those letters?" she said to Aldred.

"No; they are in the workbox, where I found them."

"Then leave the house, William Aldred; and if you ever enter it again, I'll—Oh! Esther, that I were a man!"

At the news of Dorothy's disappearance Northenden was wild with excitement. The Paynes had been people of position in their time, and were still very highly considered. Sympathy and help poured in upon them from every side. The investigations of the constable, and the inquiries made in every possible direction by private friends were in vain. Except that a young man and woman who had been observed sauntering along the path leading to the river on the night of the disappearance, it was affirmed that the only persons who had been seen were another couple, a gentleman and lady, the latter apparently labouring under some strong emotion.

Dr. Aldred was interrogated. He denied having left the house after directly returning to it from the Paynes, after the fierce quarrel he acknowledged having had with Dorothy. He persisted, however, in his accusations against her, and his manner implied more than he dared express in words. Although the contents of the letters were made public, Walter Mayburn's consternation at beholding the consequences of his boyish "engagement" was great. He became one of the most earnest searchers for the missing girl.

But it was of no avail. The days became weeks, and the weeks months, and still the frost held, and still was Dorothy Payne missing. There was literally no trace of her.

After the first shock, Esther had remembered the writing on the tax-paper, and examined it. There were only a few very incoherent words, and they threw no light on her fate. They ran thus:—"I cannot bear such an imputation. You know it is not true, Esther. How can he think so shamefully of me? I will not bear it." There were a few more words, but they were quite illegible.

Many thought this writing pointed to suicide; others accused Dr. Aldred of murder; only a few believed that she lived.

But it came to pass that some of the sorry riddle was read. When nearly five months had elapsed, and the spring began to release the earth from the fierce clutch of winter Dorothy Payne returned.

The sisters were at home when two gentlemen, old friends of the family, were announced.

"Let us hear, whatever it be," murmured Esther, sadly and hopelessly.

Mr. Oliver, their lawyer and friend, hesitated. "I am sorry," he faltered, "very sorry—"

"Speak out," said Margaret; "is she dead?"

"No," he said, slowly and reluctantly.

"What then?" sharply, for the base imputations cast on her sister's fair fame rankled most sorely in Margaret's heart.

"There is news, my dear girls. I would not tell it to you, if it were not very well authenticated; but we cannot doubt our source of information this time. She is living, at Portsmouth, my children. How shall I say it? You must forget her."

"You are uttering a lie!" The words burst so fiercely from Margaret's lips, that for a moment or two there was silence, in the midst of which a quick, sharp knock was heard at the door.

Little Emma had opened it. Presently a gruff voice exclaimed—

"We'n f'un' yo'r sister."

"Where?" said the child's voice.

"In the river—"

"There!" almost screamed Margaret, "there! I knew she was dead—there—go away—and never come near us again; you who could say such things of her, of Dorothy—go away." It seemed as if the girl actually exulted in the death of her sister, so great was the relief, in spite of her confidence, caused by the sure proof of her innocence.

Mr. Oliver, too sincere and true a friend to take offence at Margaret's wild words, went at once to the man, who proved to be the keeper of a lock a few miles down the river. To his inquiries he replied, that he had that morning seen something floating down the river, enclosed in a thick block of ice, he had dragged it ashore with a boat-hook, and had then seen that it was the corpse of Dorothy Payne. He had called to the first person he saw for help, who strangely enough was Walter Mayburn; between them they had got the body out of the water, and procured further assistance; they were now bringing her in her transparent coffin to the home she had left five months before.

While the man still spoke the group came in sight. They bore the body to the door and laid it down before the threshold.

She lay, or rather seemed to be floating fast fixed in the ice, her long fair hair was loose, her blue eyes open, the colour had not left her lips or cheeks; and looking at her it was almost impossible to believe her dead.

"It was over now, the hope, and the fear, and the sorrow." Her fair fame was vindicated, her absolute innocence proved; but how Dorothy Payne came by her death, whether she rushed to it by her own act, whether it was accident or murder, remains to this hour, as it has been for sixty-three years, an unsolved mystery.

And the doctor? He had to leave the town, escorted by a company of soldiers. Else the people would have torn him to pieces. Years after he died in a madhouse.

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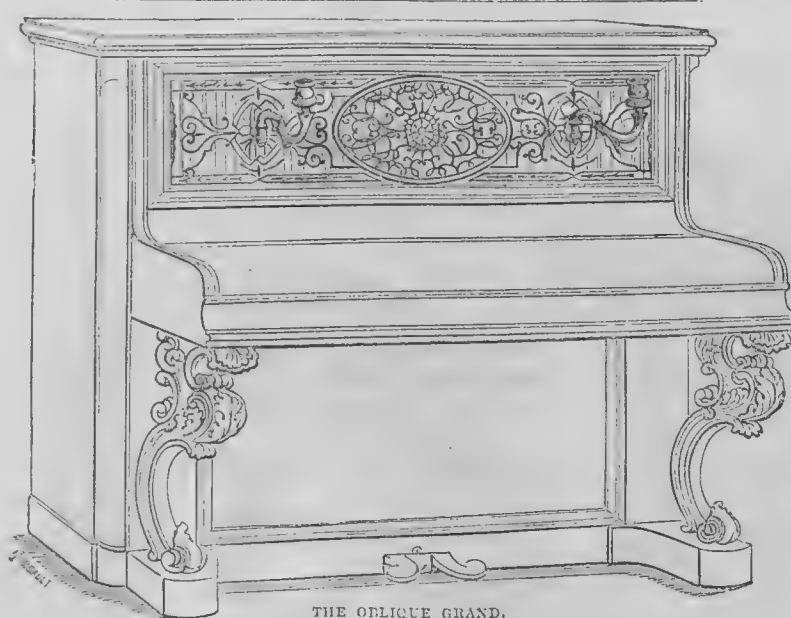
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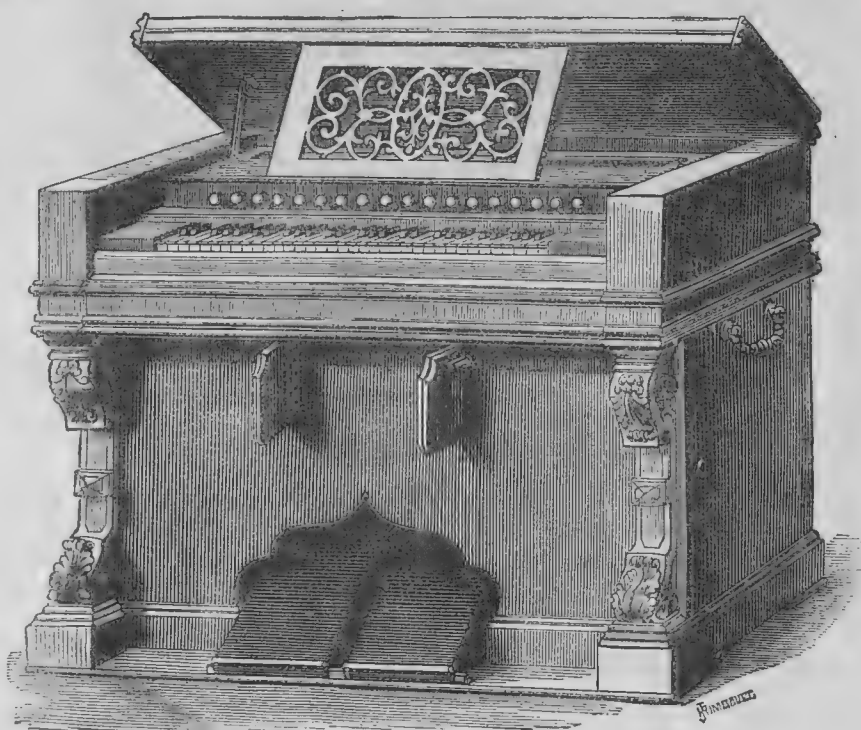
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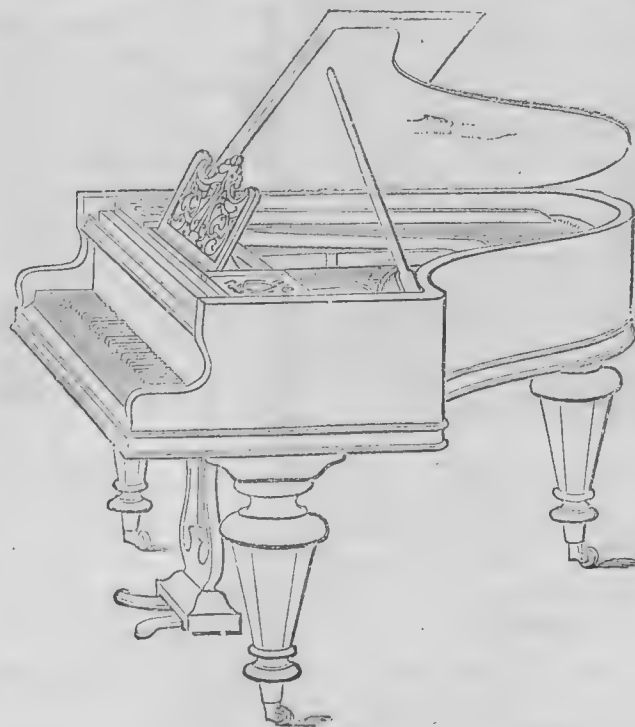
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"OUR COMIC MAN."

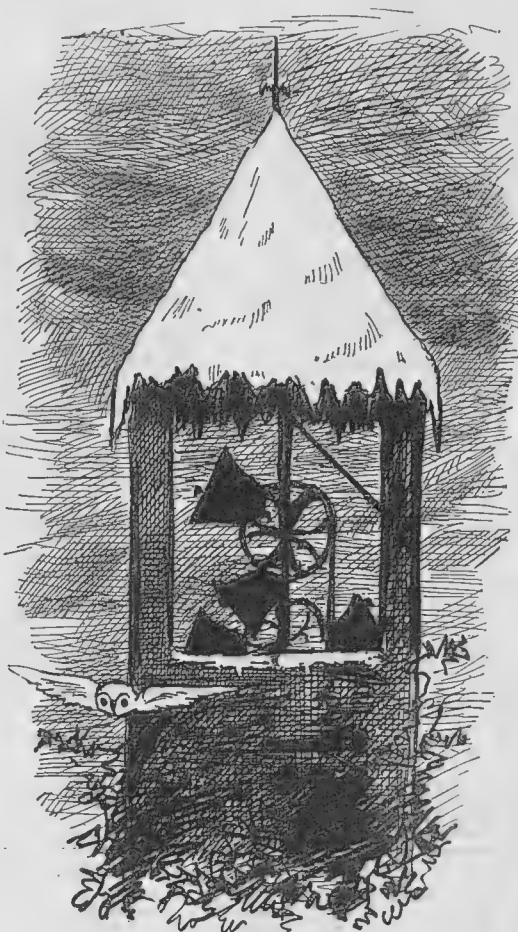
BY THE CAPTIOUS CRITIC.

I WAS miserable enough myself at the time, Heaven knows. Yet he would persist in making me the confidant of his miseries. However, what followed made me think a little less of my own troubles. It was a cathedral town, at Christmas time. The mention of this will be enough to make the poor player shudder with sympathy. We were there for pantomime purposes. I to paint scenery, and he was the comic man of the company. When I first joined it, a stranger, and rather shy at meeting new acquaintances, he held out the hand of friendship to me, did everything he could to smooth my way, and eventually we lodged in the same house. He was a clever little man with genuine and even humour; but as what I have to relate does not bear upon the art which he professed, it is needless to dwell upon his professional talents. From the bottom of my heart I hated that cathedral town, all built up hill and down dale, with a church at the corner of every street. My antipathy was unreasonable I admit. Under happier circumstances I should, doubtless, have taken much interest in examining the quaint ecclesiastical antiquities of the place. As it was, the bells of a Sunday used to drive me half mad. I had to spend my Sundays (previous to Boxing-night) in the paint-room, and the bells of a morning seemed always to be taunting me with the fact, that until after church-time, so said the law, I might not slake my thirst with a pint of beer, or warm the interior of my frame with a little hot grog. How I did hate those bells! Sturgeon (our comic man), on the contrary, liked 'em. He knew the bell-ringers quite intimately, and, indeed, was acquainted with all the curious old holes and corners of the city. It was arranged between us, that when-



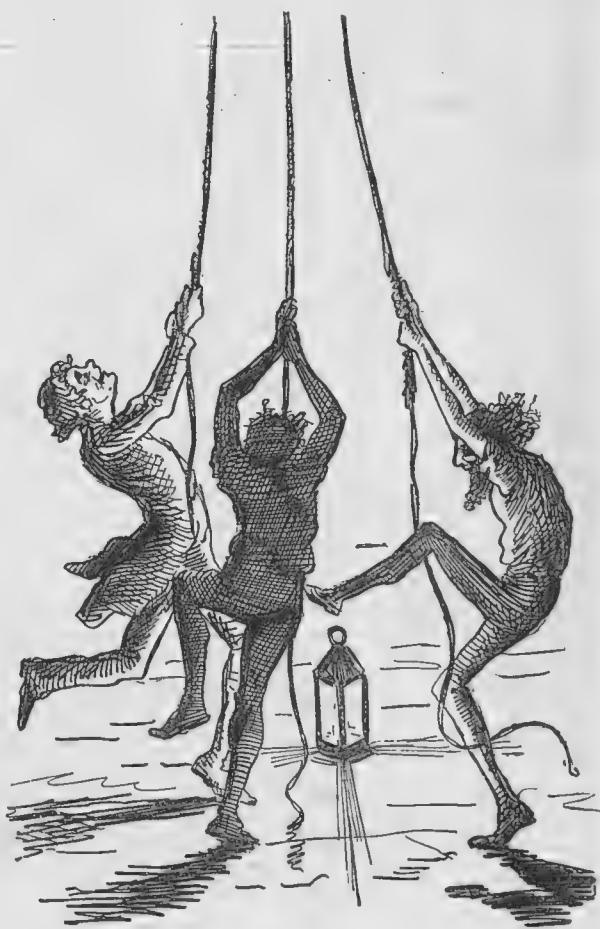
ever I should be able to spare the time, he was to take me to visit the oldest belfry in England, which, by the way, belonged to one of the churches in this very city. He was so anxious for me to see this, that I definitely settled to go with him on the night of New Year's Eve, after the performance. In the meantime he had imparted to me the secret of his sorrows. It was a woman, of course. She was the leading juvenile of the company, and her name was Belle Cardigan. Our comic man made me soon aware that he had known her from childhood, loved her for years, had been engaged to her for some time, and that she had promised to become his wife in the following spring. I did not dream of the extent of his passion for this heartless, selfish, little coquette, until I perceived the agony of his efforts to fight against the suspicion of what to me was evident enough before I had been a week in the theatre, namely, that there was a secret understanding between Belle and the manager. Our comic man had his fits of fierce doubt; but Belle had always managed by lies and blandishments to dispel entirely those glimmerings of reason, and he would come home at night to our lodging, blindly rejoicing. "Don't tell me," he would say; "no woman that is not good and true would put her arms round your neck, and with her whole frame shaken with emotion, tell you weeping that you are all the world to her, if she didn't mean it." I could have aptly replied that this was exactly what the woman who is not good and true is more capable of doing than any other born animal; but I cared not to disturb his illusions, because they were his only gleams of happiness. He would say, with Othello, "If she be false then Heaven mocks itself—I'll not believe it." At last, however, deception became useless. On the night before New Year's Eve I had been home nearly three hours before Sturgeon came in, and when he did come in I saw by his face that he knew the truth.

"They are really married," was all he said about the matter; and we sate up almost till morning, he talking incessantly all the time in a strain of wild and reckless hilarity. Droll anecdote after droll anecdote dropped from his tongue in rapid succession; and I listened in amazement. As we separated for the night he reminded me of my promise to visit the belfry of St. Ethelwold's on the morrow night. "I will make them ring," said he, "her



wedding bells—such a peal as never was heard before, and never will be heard again."

The means he took to inspire the bell-ringers were not novel. The next afternoon he conducted me to a little old-fashioned public-house, a quaint, mellow, old place where the ringers did most resort. With these worthy individuals he was mightily popular. They had known him from childhood, for our comic man's father had been the sexton of St. Ethelwold's. Nothing loth to indulge in the liberties of the festive season, these sapient bell-ringers had sundry "goes" of hot liquor at my friend's expense, and they had reached the degree of spirituous elevation at



which church officials always begin to give you their opinions upon parochial dignity, when it was time for us to go to the theatre.

I never saw our comic man act so well as he did that night. His "gags" were so sharp, witty, and spontaneous, that the other actors for the moment forgot their business to listen to him. He seemed to rival Belle Cardigan as much as possible, but I noticed her once at the wing talking earnestly to him for a few minutes with her large, open, candid-looking, but utterly deceitful eyes suffused with sympathetic moisture. Afterwards, when the pantomime was over, he came up to the dressing-room muttering, "Her poverty, she says, and not her will consented. And all the time I could see that in her mind she was saying, *How plain he is—how ever could I have thought of marrying him?* Bah! I shall never look at my cursed ugly mug again. Never!" And

uttering these words he took the little looking-glass, by the aid of which he had so often "made up" his homely features, threw it on the floor, and ground it to fragments with his heel. When we left the theatre the night was growing stormy. Slush was under foot and driving sleet above. As our custom was, we went into the tavern next door to the theatre (there is always a tavern next door to a theatre) to have a last drink. The landlord's little daughter, a pretty child of five summers, was a special pet with our comic man. And on this night he seemed particularly anxious to see her before he left. "I hope little Rosy will not be gone to bed," he had said, two or three times during the evening. As it turned out, the child had been allowed to sit up, in order to see the New Year in. Sturgeon took her upon his knee, and it was only when, after looking attentively into his face, she said, "You're very ugly, but I am very fond of you," did a great sob heave up from the poor fellow's crushed heart. He hid his face for a moment, then kissed the child, and, putting her down, said to me, "What fools men can be when they like—eh, Whitewash?" (this was his nickname for me). Heigho! the wind and rain. Gramercy, my very good lord, the night grows old. Wilt to the belfry of St. Ethelwold?"

To the church we wended our steps. Whether it was the wild night-rain beating upon my face, or the numerous and unusual potations I had imbibed during the day, or my companion's strange manner, I cannot tell, but somehow it seemed as if I were passing through the mysteries of a dream. Stumbling frequently over the gravestones, we at last reached the antique postern that opened to the belfry steps. Following my friend, I ascended the winding worn stone staircase that seemed to have no end. At last, we reached the bell-ringers' chamber. They were all assembled—the same men whom I had met at the little publichouse a few hours earlier, but, as it seemed to me, now transformed into weird figures of a bygone time. Possibly the gnomes and demons of the pantomime had got mixed up in my mind with these ordinary creatures of earth, until I fancied the whole scene to be no more



than a theatrical phantasm. Every man stood by his rope, and the clock showed that the time wanted but five minutes of midnight. "Come along, my boy," said our comic man to me; "we must go up higher to hear the full effect of the old bells." I followed him. The steps became steeper and steeper, until there were no more steps, and I found myself right up among the machinery of the ancient belfry of St. Ethelwold's. Our comic man had climbed dexterously into one of the open stone windows of the steeple. He gave his hand to me, and lifted me up beside him. It was just upon the verge of midnight. I could see the great bells beginning to sway. The cold sleet was blowing in upon us. Sturgeon stepped out upon the narrow parapet, and stood between me and the winter sky. "Now," said he, "I will show you a sensation scene that none of your dramatists can rival. Work it up, my boy." The bells suddenly clanged out in brazen thunder, and before I could realise my position, our comic man, with a wild yell, leapt out into sheer space. Sickened and stunned, I remained for some moments without moving. Then I tried to look over the parapet, but the darkness and the storm were impenetrable. I managed to climb down to the bell-ringers' chamber. The demons were pulling away at the ropes, and singing a ghastly monotonous chorus the while. I shouted to them of what had occurred. They only grinned and went on ringing. I groped my way down the belfry stairs, and at length reached the churchyard. I found the base of the tower, and there, indeed, lay my poor comrade, crushed and shattered, while the bells that he had made so drunk were ringing out such a peal of wild, delirious ecstasy as never before had issued from their hollow metal throats. At the theatre, next morning, the suicide of our comic man was naturally the chief topic of conversation. Belle Cardigan said, "Poor old fellow, I'm awfully sorry, but I always thought he was a little mad."

WE have received from Messrs. Metzler and Co., of Great Marlborough-street, specimen copies of their Illuminated Musical Souvenir series for Christmas; a charming novelty for the season, to which we are pleased to call the attention of our readers.

RAILWAYS.

MANCHESTER.

In addition to the afternoon Fast Trains leaving Euston Station at 2.45 and 5.0 p.m., a New EXPRESS TRAIN leaves EUSTON for MANCHESTER at 4.0 p.m., travelling via the Potteries and Macclesfield, and reaching Manchester at 8.45 p.m.

Convenient Trains for Hanley, Newcastle, Etruria, Longport, Congleton, &c., leave Stoke in connection with this Train.

TABLE OF EXPRESS TRAINS TO AND FROM MANCHESTER (Week Days).											
EUSTON, Departure.						MANCHESTER (London-road), Arrival.					
a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
5.15	7.30	9.0	10.10	11.0	12.10	2.45	4.0	5.0	9.15		
MANCHESTER (London-road), Departure.											
10.0	12.30	2.20	3.10	4.0	5.20	7.30	8.45	9.45	2.45		
MANCHESTER (London-road), Departure.											
a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	noon.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.		
7.45	9.30	11.10	12.0	2.0	4.15	5.25	10.55	11.20			

EUSTON, Arrival.

12.25 ... 2.15 ... 4.0 ... 5.15 ... 7.10 ... 9.15 ... 10.45 ... 4.30 ... 5.30

Sleeping Saloons are now attached to the train leaving Euston Station at 9.15 p.m., returning from Manchester (London-road) by the 10.55 p.m. train every night. Extra charge, 5s. in addition to the ordinary first-class fare.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.

On THURSDAY, December 21, and following days. CHEAP THIRD CLASS RETURN TICKETS will be issued by certain trains from PADDINGTON, Victoria, Battersea, Chelsea, West Brompton, Kensington (Addison-road), Uxbridge-road, and Westbourne Park, to CHARD, South Molton, Barnstaple, Ilfracomb, EXETER, Mutly, PLYMOUTH, Devonport, Marsh Mills, Bickleigh, Horrabridge, Tavistock, Mary Tavy, Launceston, Truro, Falmouth, Penzance, Yeovil, Dorchester, WEYMOUTH, and Portland, and vice versa, available for return up to and including Friday, December 29. These tickets can be obtained at the Stations, or at the Company's Receiving Offices, 245, Holborn; 39, Charing-cross; 5, Arthur-street, London Bridge; 82, Queen Victoria-street; 43 and 44, Crutched Friars; 4, Cheapside; and 351, Oxford-street.

On SATURDAY, 23rd inst., extra carriages will be attached to the 9.0 p.m. Limited Mail Train from Paddington, and First and Second Class passengers can obtain tickets for Gloucester, Cheltenham, Bristol and Stations beyond, available for this Train on Friday, 22nd inst., and up to the time of departure on Saturday evening.

On SATURDAY, December 23rd, a SPECIAL FAST TRAIN (1st, 2nd, and 3rd Class) will leave PADDINGTON STATION at 10.0 p.m. for EXETER and Plymouth, calling at Reading, at 10.55 p.m.; Swindon, 12.10; Bath, 1.5; Bristol, 1.35; Bridgwater, 2.35; Taunton, 3.30; Exeter, 4.40; Dawlish, 5.15; Teignmouth, 5.25; Newton, 5.45; Totnes, 6.5; and Kingsbridge-road, 6.30; and reaching Plymouth at 7.0 a.m.

Passengers can be booked at the intermediate stations at which this train calls, and the cheap third-class return tickets from London to Exeter and Plymouth will be available by it.

The cheap Saturday to Monday tickets from LONDON to WINDSOR, Henley, Dorchester and Weymouth, issued on December 23rd or 24th, will be available for return until following Wednesday. With a few exceptions, the trains on Christmas-day, will run as on Sundays. For further particulars, see special bills.

J. GRIERSON, General Manager.

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MISS HEATH'S PROVINCIAL TOUR, Accompanied by Mr. WILSON BARRETT'S COMPANY, suspended during Miss Heath's Engagement at the PRINCESS'S THEATRE, LONDON. The Company (re-arranged) will travel with "THE SHAUGHRAUN," and appear at

GAIETY THEATRE, WEST HARTLEPOOL, Six Nights.

All letters to be addressed to Mr. WILSON BARRETT, Princess's Theatre, London.

Agent, Mr. LEE ANDERSON. Acting Manager, Mr. MORRIS ARONS.

EXHIBITION OF CABINET PICTURES IN OIL.—Dudley Gallery, Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly.—The TENTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION is OPEN daily from 10 to 5. Admission 1s. Catalogue 6d.—R. F. M'NAIR, Secretary.

THE MARBLE RINK, CLAPHAM ROAD, NEAR KENNINGTON GATE.

This Magnificent RINK, both indoor and out, will be OPEN to the Public on TUESDAY, 26th December (BOXING DAY), from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

SOUTH KENSINGTON SKATING GROUNDS. OPEN AND COVERED.

Entrances: ROLAND GARDENS & THISTLE GROVE, OLD BROMPTON-ROAD, Within five minutes' walk from South Kensington and Gloucester-road Stations.

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Admission, 1s. 6d. Picton's Skates, 6d. Band every afternoon and evening.

MDME. TUSSAUD'S EXHIBITION, Baker-street. PORTRAIT MODELS of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, M.W.G.M. of Freemasons of England, the Emperor and Empress of Russia, Emperor and Empress of Germany, King Alfonso XII., Victor Emmanuel, the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, the Sultan of Turkey, Earl of Derby. Costly Court Dresses. The complete line of British Monarchs, and 300 portrait Models of Celebrities, and the late Cardinal Antonelli. Admission, One Shilling. Children under Twelve, Sixpence. Extra Room, Sixpence. Open from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m.

THEATRES.

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.—

On Monday, Wednesday and Friday, MACBETH. Macbeth, Mr. Barry Sullivan. On Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, at 7.45, RICHARD III. Richard III., Mr. Barry Sullivan. Messrs. H. Sinclair, J. F. Cathcart, C. Vandenboff, F. W. Irish, H. Pyatt, F. Tyars, H. Russell, J. Johnstone, R. Dolman, C. H. Fenton; Mrs. Hermann Vezin, Mesdames Fanny Huddart, E. Stuart, E. Collins, H. Coveney, C. Jecks and Miss and Master Grattan. Preceded by, at 7, THAT BEAUTIFUL BICEPS. To conclude with THE STORM FIEND. Box-office open from Ten till Five daily.

ROYAL PRINCESS'S THEATRE.—

On Monday, and during the week, MR. AND MRS. WHITE. After which, at a Quarter to Eight, a New and Original Historical Play, entitled JANE SHORE, written by W. G. Wills; Messrs. James Fernandez, J. W. Ford, B. Bentley, A. Revelle, F. Strickland, J. Smyth, B. Pedley, G. Weston, E. Price, Miss Heath, Mesdames A. Mellon, Manders, M. Brunett, Miss and Master Coote. To conclude with at 10.15, a Comic Ballet entitled THE MAGIC FLUTE. Prices, 6d. to £3 3s. Doors open at Half-past Six; commence at Seven. Box-office open from Ten till Five daily.

ROYAL ADELPHI THEATRE.—

Every Evening, at 7, GIVE A DOG A BAD NAME. At 8, SHAUGHRAUN, Messrs. C. Sullivan, S. Emery, W. Terriss, Britain Wright, W. M'Intyre, J. G. Shore, H. Vaughan, and Mesdames Rose Coghan, Hudspeth, Taylor, C. Nott, E. Phillips, &c. Box-office open from Ten till Five daily.

THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.—

Lessee and Manager, Mr. J. B. Buckstone. Every Evening, at 7.30, the Comic Drama, A ROUGH DIAMOND, Mr. Buckstone as Cousin Joe; Margery, Miss Lafontaine. After which, at 8.30, DAN'L DRUCE, 84th time. Characters by Messrs. Hermann Vezin, Howe, Braid, Forbes Robertson, Odell, &c., and Miss Marion Terry. Conclude with BIRDS IN THEIR LITTLE NESTS AGREE. Messrs. Kyrle, Gordon. Mesdames M. Harris, K. Irwin, Osborne, and E. Dietz. Doors open at 7. Carriages at 11. Box-office open 10 till 5.

GAIETY THEATRE, STRAND.—Sole

Lessee and Manager, Mr. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.—Return of Mr. T. OOLE.—First Nights of Albery's new Piece, THE MAN IN POSSESSION, and revival of SPELLING BEE. Open 7.0, begin 7.15. AFTERNOON PERFORMANCES Every Saturday (see Daily Papers).

FOLLY THEATRE.—Proprietor and Mana-

ger, Mr. Alex. Henderson. MISS LYDIA THOMPSON and the entire company in Farnie's new burlesque. The very latest edition of ROBINSON CRUSOE, on Monday and every evening until further notice. The performance will commence at 7.30 with the Two-Act Comedy, by A. Halliday, of CHECK MATE. At 8.40 the very latest edition of ROBINSON CRUSOE, by Farnie. Both Pieces supported with the entire strength of the Company: Musical Director, Mr. Michael Connelly. Acting Manager, Mr. J. C. Scanlan.

FOLLY THEATRE.—Special Notice.—Owing

to the enormous success that nightly attends the performance of ROBINSON CRUSOE, and the overflowing audiences who testify to the admirable manner in which the burlesque is acted, with its brilliant mounting and charming music, the management beg to announce that the burlesque will be continued until further notice, and that many new additions and improvements will be made in the text and music for Christmas. Special Morning Performances will be given as follows:—Tuesday, 26th December (Boxing Day), Two o'clock; Saturday, 30th December, Two o'clock; Saturday, 6th January, Two o'clock. LITTLE DICK WHITTINGTON, by Reece, in rehearsal, and will be produced with brilliant effects upon the withdrawal of "Robinson Crusoe."

CRITERION THEATRE.—Lessee and Man-

ager, Mr. Alex. Henderson. Immense success of the NEW COMEDY, Charles Wyndham, and the entire company much augmented. On Monday, and every evening during the week, the performance will commence at 7.30 with THE WALL OF CHINA; at 8, A TALE OF A TUB. Followed at 8.45 by a farcical Comedy, in three acts, entitled HOT WATER, from Meilhac and Halévy. Characters by Messrs. Charles Wyndham, E. Righton, J. B. Rae, H. Standing, J. Clarke, H. Ashley. Mesdames Fanny Josephs, Nelly Bromley, Bastlake, M. Davis, Edith Bruce, M. Holmes. NOTICE.—Special Morning Performances of HOT WATER will be given in this Theatre as follows:—Tuesday, December 26th, and Saturday, December 30th, at Two o'clock. Acting Manager, Mr. H. J. Hitchins.

ROYAL ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.—

Lessee and Manager, MRS. JOHN WOOD.—Miss Lydia Foote, Mr. George Honey, Mr. C. Warner, and Mrs. John Wood, with the entire Company much augmented, in Dion Boucicault's Comedy of LONDON ASSURANCE, every evening. Owing to the enormous success attending the performance of NILSSON OR NOTHING, with Mrs. John Wood and Mr. George Honey, it will be repeated nightly until further notice. On MONDAY, and every evening during the week, will be presented at 7.30, LONDON ASSURANCE. Characters by Messrs. C. Warner, W. H. Stephens, C. Cooper, F. Mervin, R. Markby, Benbrook, G. Darrell, Bauer, and Mr. George Honey. Mesdames Lydia Foote, Telbin, and Mrs. John Wood. To conclude with, at 10.30, NILSSON OR NOTHING. Jenny Leatherlungs, Mrs. John Wood, in which character she will give her celebrated imitations of Opera Singers, and her inimitable song HIS HEART WAS TRUE TO POLL. Granby Gag, Mr. George Honey.—Box office open from 10 till 5. Doors open at 7.

ROYAL STRAND THEATRE.—Sole Lessee

and Manageress, Mrs. Swanborough.—On MONDAY, and Every Evening, at 7, KEEP YOUR TEMPER.—At 8, Comedy, CREMORNE. Messrs. Vernon, Cox, Taylor, &c.; Mesdames Venne, Turner, &c.—Conclude with the Burlesque DAN'L TRA-DUCED, TINKER. Messrs. Marius, Cox, Taylor, &c.; Mesdames Venne, Jones, &c.

VAUDEVILLE THEATRE.—Lessees

Messrs. D. James and T. Thorne. Enormous success of OUR BOYS. Every Evening, at 7.30, A WHIRLIGIG; at 8, the most successful comedy, OUR BOYS, written by H. J. Byron. Concluding with A FEARFUL FOG; supported by Messrs. William Farren, David James, C. W. Garthorne, J. P. Bernard, W. Lestocq, A. Austin and Thomas Thorne. Mesdames Amy Roselle, Kate Bishop, Nellie Walters, Cicely Richards, Sophie Larkin, &c. Free List entirely suspended. Acting Manager, Mr. D. McKay. N.B.—Saturday morning, Dec. 16, Annual Benefit of Mr. D. McKay.

GLOBE THEATRE.—HUNTED DOWN

every Evening. Genuine success of the Drama and Comic Opera. Doors open at 6.30. Farce at 7. HUNTED DOWN, drama in three acts, by Dion Boucicault, at 7.45. Enthusiastic calls after each act. Comic opera in one act, by Hay and Solomon. A WILL WITH A VENGEANCE at 9.45. Nearly every number of music enclosed.—Acting Manager, Mr. Douglas Cox.

ROYAL COURT THEATRE.—Mr. Hare

Lessee and Manager.—Every Evening, punctually at Eight o'clock, NEW MEN AND OLD ACRES, written by Tom Taylor and A. W. Dubourg. The principal characters will be acted by Miss Ellen Terry, Mrs. Gaston Murray, Mrs. Stephens, Miss Kate Aubrey; Mr. Kelly, Mr. Anson, Mr. Conway, Mr. Ersser Jones, and Mr. Hare. The new scenery painted by Messrs. Gordon and Harford.—Doors open at 7.30. Box-office hours 11 to 5.—Acting-Manager, Mr. John Huy.

SANGER'S GRAND NATIONAL AMPHI-

THEATRE, Westminster Bridge Road. LAST WEEK OF "WATERLOO."

Notwithstanding the tremendous success of this great spectacular drama, it must positively be withdrawn on Saturday, the 16th inst., to enable the Messrs. Sanger to make preparations for the production of their greatest Pantomime. Great change in the circus programme. Time and prices as usual. Two Last Morning Performances on December 9 and 16. Box-office open daily.

MR. AND MRS. GERMAN REED'S

ENTERTAINMENT. First Piece—

MATCHED AND MATED.

After which, A Fairy Vision in One Peep, entitled—

A DOLL'S HOUSE.

and A New Musical sketch for the Christmas holidays, by CORNEY GRAIN.

HENGLER'S GRAND CIRQUE, Argyll-

street, Oxford-circus, open every Evening at 7, commencing at 7.30; Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.30 and 7.30, with the Star Company of Riders, Acrobats, Jugglers, inimitable Comic Clowns, and splendid Stud of Horses and Ponies. Admission 4s., 3s., 2s., and 1s. Carriages may be ordered for Evening at 10.20; Mid-day representations, 4.15. Box-office open daily from 10 to 4.—Proprietor and Director, Mr. Charles Hengler.

HENGLER'S GRAND CIRQUE, Argyll-

street, Oxford-circus. The Great Riders—Signor Erber, Mr. W. Randall, and Miss Boswell; Signor Artizelli, the greatest Rope-dancer in the world, and the marvellous Pruniere.—Proprietor and Director, Mr. Charles Hengler.

ROYAL GRECIAN THEATRE, City-road.—

Sole Proprietor, Mr. George Conquest.

NOTICE.—MR. GEORGE CONQUEST will appear only at his own Theatre next Christmas, and will give Morning Performances of the Pantomime every Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday. Last Six Nights of the Season. In consequence of the great preparation for the production of the Pantomime, the Theatre will be closed after next week, until Saturday, the 23rd, when will be produced the Grand Christmas Pantomime. Dancing in the New Hall.

BRITANNIA THEATRE, HOXTON.—Sole

Proprietress, Mrs. S. Lane.—Every Evening (Wednesday excepted) at 6.45, SURGEON OF PARIS. Mr. J. B. Howe, Messrs. Drayton, Rhoyds, Fox, Higwood, Pitt, Parry, Hyde; Mdles. Bellair, Brewer, Summers, Mrs. Newham. Incidentals, E. Mosedale, Minnie Venn, Austins, and Hess. Concluding with JANE SHORE. Messrs. Reynolds, Newbound, Roberts, Jackson; Mdles. Adams, Bellair. Wednesday, the Benefit of Mr. J. B. Howe. Monday, December 18, the Annual Benefit of Mrs. S. Lane.

THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S GAR-

DENS, Regent's Park, are OPEN daily (except Sunday). Admission 1s.; on Monday, 6d.; Children always 6d. Among the most recent additions are three American Darters, and two Esquimaux Dogs from Whale Sound, presented by Captain Allen Young, of the Pandora. The Elephant House contains Five Rhinoceroses and Six Elephants.

NEXT WEEK'S NUMBER

which will be published on the 23rd inst., will contain, amongst other illustrations—

MR. HOWE,

in "Dan'l Druce," a double-page drawing, by MATT STRETCH.

Steeple-chasing in the Isle of Wight,

by J. STURGESS.

A Novel Presentation.—Weston's Rival.—Mr. Irving in Dublin.—A Christmas Box.—Frederic Lemaître (second and concluding series of illustrations), and a portrait of MISS LUCY BUCKSTONE.

*. Owing to an accident having befallen the block on the eye of our going to press, we are unable to include Mr. Dower Wilson's "Largesse" amongst the illustrations of the present number.

MR. STREETER,

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"JEWELS OF RICH AND EXQUISITE FORM."—Cymbeline, Act I. sc. ii.

OUR COLOURED PICTURE.

WITH this Number we present our readers with the fac-simile of a cabinet picture from the pencil of the renowned painter o "Can't you Talk?" Amongst Mr. G. A. Holmes's numerous happy efforts, "You Really Must" deservedly takes an exalted position. It might be going too far perhaps to pronounce it the best work that has left his easel; but it is indubitably one of the best. We shall feel somewhat disappointed if the art-loving public do not consider with us that the bright little picture fairly holds its own in all the essentials of treatment, manipulation, and colour with the most felicitous productions of the Dutch school. It is a work that Mulready or Mr. Webster, in his most vigorous days, might have been proud of. The story is so well told, that little or nothing need be said here in the shape of elucidation. It is clear that every member of the juvenile sanitary commission is sternly resolved that the cleansing of their four-footed favourites shall be thorough—that not a single unwilling pet shall escape the rigours of his Saturday night's ablutions. We deem it necessary to state that our reproduction of Mr. Holmes's picture is the exact size of the original—for the gracious loan of which by the present owner, Mrs. James, of Hill House, Wavertree, Liverpool, we are more than grateful. The perfect fidelity of the copy, in brilliancy and general effect, reflects great credit on the eminent firm of Leighton Brothers.

SOME OF OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

It was not considered desirable to surround the whole of the illustrations of this number with text. For the most part poet and story-teller have been suffered to work independently of draughtsmen. In accordance with the custom which was established two years since, AMPHION performs what may not inaptly be termed our "title rôle." The graceful pen which produced "Waes Hael" and "The Stirrup Cup" tells to-day in characteristically melodious style a tale of "Auld Lang Syne." He and Mr. Barnard bear our banner. To them we are chiefly indebted for a congenial reading of the motto with which it is inscribed. For the rest we are scarcely concerned to advance any argument in favour of adopting as the title for our Christmas number the homely phrase which is to be seen at the head of this page. We cherish an old-fashioned belief in the reality of the season's kindness, notwithstanding the suspiciously ostentatious shape which many of its manifestations assume. Dickens's Christmas stories are as fresh and as welcome to us now as they were when, by reason of their innumerable touches of nature they first made the whole world kin. But we ought not to require the touch even of his vanished hand to remind us of the season's gentle amenities. If the use of a homely hearty phrase can aid in perpetuating these—and we think it can—we have not infelicitously crossed the Tweed to obtain our motto—"FOR AULD LANG SYNE!" With our steadfast friends, wondrously augmented in numbers and strength since we greeted them in Saxon fashion with "Waes Hael!"

"We'll tak a cup o' kindness ye For AULD LANG SYNE."

AFTER THE SONG.

TRANSFORMED by the sound of his footfall she flew
To the lattice and stood in a tremble of bliss;
Her eyes glistened softly—dark pansies, all dew!
And—wet cloven roses!—the lips curved to kiss!

And oh! when his song, like a dove at the pane,
Meets the maiden ere soaring away to the stars;
New meaning she plucks from the passionate strain,
New reasons in legions for loathing her bars.

A-weary with watching her nurse is asleep;
Awake's the brave hound, crouching rigid as death,
Subdued by his mistress; while sombre and deep
Is the hush that encircles the wooer's sweet breath.

She could listen for ages, she thinks, to a prayer
So pensively cadenced, so tenderly framed;
Sweet ditty!—ear never heard ditty more rare—
Since Music of lovers fond fealty claimed.

Down whimpering hound!—and yet blood's in the noise
That changes to terror her roseate dream:
Too stealthy the footstep, too certain the poise
Of the blade over swift in its grimness to gleam.

From her chamber with maddening horror she flies,
(The hound dashes onward ferociously fleet).
Despairing and dying they mingle their sighs.
His poor relaxed lips her fierce kisses meet.

Disturb not the household. Summon no leech.
The song is concluded, its perfume is shed.
Tho' blood-for-blood vengeance the murderer reach
She recks not, poor darling! her lover is dead.

B. W.

MRS. BROWN'S FIRST PANTOMIME.

BY ARTHUR SKETCHLEY.

AH! they was somethink like days them was as my dear mother did used to talk about when parties did used go to Pantermine of a fine summer evenin' and not a scrougin and a drivin' enuf to break any ones back all thro' the fog and slush, as is enuf to choke you, and then nothink to see not to make you larf not like old Joey Grimaldi, as were pretty nigh the death of old King George, as a Aunt of mine used to tell me leastways she were my dear mother's aunt as lived at Pentonwill and remembered the White Conduit 'ouse a standin' in the fields and 'ardly a 'ouse between 'er cottage, and Copyagin 'ouse. Not as she were old when I remembered 'er fust as is over fifty year ago, and then 'er mother was alive, as was both in the laundry line, and 'ad got up fine things for the Lady Maress and did used to wash for Joey Grimaldi as were the famous Clown—and 'ad the young lady as did used to dance Columbine a lodgin' with 'er one time along with 'er mother and I've 'eard 'er say as good a gal as ever trod shoe leather as the sayin' is. But thro' Battersea not agreein' with me, not bein' over strong when a child, and my mother's 'ands that full thro' 'er family comin' along that quick was why I were put down too soon and threatened with bandy legs at three but was as straight as a lath afore seven thro' bay salt and water every morning of my life, as was somethink like a mother as five o'clock never see in bed winter nor summer except of a Sunday, and never a rag washed arter Wednesday in 'er place tho' she'd several large families as she washed for but never cared to take no schools, but bless you in 'er days Battersea were a wilderness, with the Red 'Ouse a standin' all alone but never quite suited me and that's why I were better a stoppin' at Pentonwill as is 'igh ground and more bracin' to the limbs. I were not more than seven when while a stoppin' there I did used to play with a little gal as belonged to the Theayter and did used to tell me all about it as she said were wonderful fine partikler pantermimes as would make you die with lafter partikler the Clown as she did used to call 'im Old Joe, and said he were kinder to 'er than a father and said as I must come to see 'im some night if Aunt would let me. The mother were a quiet sort of woman as Aunt said wouldn't 'ave let the gal go on, but for 'avin' of that bed ridden 'usban' on 'er back many years thro' roomatics a settlin' in his knee pans, but a good woman and that quiet, and I'm sure she 'ad n't got no more money than she know'd wot to do with as 'ad to walk with 'er gal to the Theayter wet or dry as were called Sadler's Wells and not werry far from Islin'ton thro' bein' built over the New River and so in course 'ad real water a runnin' constant whenever it were wanted like Chelsea fire ma'n as is always charged, as in course it did ought to be when you thinks of the expence it must be to bring water all that way and 'ave 'eard speak of a old lady as kep' 'er carriage up 'Ighbury way all thro' 'er father 'avin' sunk some money in the New River as turned up trumps jest when he'd lost a fine fortune jest the same as the old lady as lived in Chelsea and 'orded up 'er money in a black tea pot on a top shelf and died and forgot it as 'er 'usban' poor soul were jest a goin' to be sold up for rent, when the broker's man took and knocked the tea pot down off the shelf and broke it and out rolled a lot of money as was notes and gold pretty nigh a 'undered pounds as the old lady 'ad left behind, as not only paid the rent but kep' the poor old man out of the 'ouse till 'is dyin' day and comfortable too, so its a good thing to put away your money tho' I shouldn't fancy a sinkin' of it in no river Old or New unless it were in a bottle like they do at sea as is 'ow Mrs. Probin come to know as 'er 'usban' 'ad money in the savin's banks thro' 'im in writin' of it in a bottle and throwin' of it over board as the ship were a sinkin' up in them Polar bear seas tho' he turned up years afore the bottle thro' a floatin' on the top of a ice bu'g, as were picked up by a waler, as its a mussy didn't swaller 'im. Well as I were a sayin' I'm sure I shan't never forget that young gal bein' brought 'ome with a broken limb as I did often used to play with as 'appened thro' 'er a goin' thro' the 'rong trap door at the theayter, as made a mistake and went and stood over the one as a demon were a comin' up instead of that one where the good fairy were to go down so in course there were a reglar collusion atween 'em as sent 'er flyin' poor thing. Aunt wouldn't 'ave 'er took the 'ospital when they brought 'er 'ome on a shetter thro' 'er mother only 'avin' one room, and the child 'ad to sleep on the floor, cos the poor father he took up all the bed as would scream with hagony if touched and could only be moved in a sheet, so

that poor thing were brought into Aunt's and 'ad a bed in the same room with me and the doctor said as he would pull 'er thro' tho' he were much afeard as she'd 'ave a limp to 'er dyin' day. She were that patient poor thing and I did used to be a good deal with 'er; and there were one old party as did used to come and see 'er and comforted 'er poor gal for she did use to fret at thinkin' as 'ow as she'd walk with a crutch as in course nobody couldn't dance with so in course 'er dancin' days would be over; I remember well thro' 'avin' 'eard aunt say as that there Old Joe were that kind to that young gal as he sent 'er poor dear everythink as 'er art could wish only in course he couldn't give 'er a new leg, tho' he did used to come and see 'er and make 'is joke and say as she should 'ave one of 'is legs, cos he didn't want it as he were a goin' to retire. I remembered 'im werry well as did used to make sich funny faces, and the boys as all reg-lar loved 'im, did used to call arter 'im, and sing out "'Ot Codlin's" as he went along as was 'is faverite fruits as would shake 'is stick and larf at 'em. He was a kind good soul and I'm sure 'is kindness to that gal were downright wonderful and she were that pleased to see 'im and I'm sure he did 'er more good than the doctor, not as I means to run down no doctors as is good men and 'ave no doubt often saved life. But a good many weeks went by, and that gal went back to 'er mother, cos the father were moved to the 'ospital, but Aunt she see 'er constant, and let me go too but some'ow she'd never got up 'er strength arter breakin' 'er leg and then she had a dreadful shock thro' losin' of 'er father as died in the 'ospital without either 'er or 'er mother a seein' of 'im, as seemed to prey on 'er sperrits werry much. I was a good deal with 'er tho' some said as I didn't ought to be, and when that nice old gentleman he come to see 'er he always noticed me and would bring me a oringe or a sponge cake. I shan't never forget the night as she were took wuss and they wouldn't let me stop in the room; so I went and set by the kitchen fire for it were chilly tho' pretty nigh summer time when Aunt come in all of a 'urry and told me to run to the Theayter and say as poor Nelly wanted to see Mr. Grimaldi partikler, and she says to me you ask to see 'im and tell 'im as she's a goin' fast. I didn't bu'st out a cryin' not till I got out of the 'ouse, for fear as she should 'ear me, and then run across the fields as led up to Islin'ton a cryin' fit to break my 'art, but when I got to the Theayter I pulled myself together but 'ad to wait ever so long afore I could see the gentleman as were the Clown cos I couldn't remember 'is name as come and spoke to me in sich wonderful clothes as he'd been and acted in, and 'is face all painted with a broad grin, but no sooner 'eard wot I 'ad to say than he throwed on a cloak, got into 'is 'ackney coach as were waitin' and took me with 'im all of a 'urry to see poor Nelly, tho' I do believe as I could 'ave run quicker cos there was a short cut over the fields as was a beginnin' to be built over even then. When we got to Aunt's cottage there was one or two naybours in the downstairs room so I managed to creep up into poor Nelly's bedroom, and as good luck would 'ave it she'd jest asked for me. So up I went along with that party and when I just see 'im in 'is playactin' clothes she bust out a larfin' and then a cryin' but he spoke that kind to 'er tho' the tears was a runnin' down 'is own cheeks. Ah! it was a sight as I shan't never forget to see that poor dear thing a smilin' so 'appy at that kind dear old man a 'oldin' of 'er 'and; but it were too much for me so they took me out of the room, and when I got downstairs there was mother come to fetch me 'ome in a shay cart as she'd 'ired to take some things 'ome to Brunswick Square as was goin' out to Ingier, for there wasn't no busses nor yet cabs in them days; so 'ome I went, and then mother 'ad a deal of trouble, and wot with one thing and the other I didn't 'ear nothink about Nelly, cos there wasn't no penny post in them days, and people didn't go about as they do nowadays, and from Battersea to Pentonwill were a long journey. So weeks went by and one day Aunt come over for to fetch me to see 'er and we went in a 'ackney coach a bit of the way as Aunt called a lift and then ad to walk the rest. Some 'ow I cu'dn't ask nothink about Nelly I was afraid and when we got to Aunt's she said as she were a goin' to take me to the Pantermine, as it were a promise as she'd made to that dear Old gentleman as I should go; and she asked my mother's leave I were a goin' to ask about Nelly but some 'ow I made sure as she were dead so didn't like to, partikler as I eard Aunt a sayin' said as Nelly had made 'em promise to take me, afore the summer were over I didn't say nothink cos it weren't considred manners in them days for little people to ask questions or speak much before their elders. So I made sure as Nelly were dead and thought as that's why it were as I went afore the summer were over and I were glad to go jest to see that dear old gentleman as ad been like a father to poor Nelly tho' Aunt said as she wasn't nothink to 'im, but only thro' 'avin' that tender 'art he'd took a fancy to 'er when a little bit of a child when she fust went on as a fairy in the pantermine thro' 'er father being a stage carpenter and 'er mother a workin' at the wardrobes. But in them days theayters was werry different to wot they is now with no gas, and the King and Queen and all the royal family agoin', not as ever I se 'em but 'ave eard Aunt say so as see 'em all there 'erself a settin' in a row in state that solemn as if they'd been in church; tho' the old King did used to larf fit to kill 'isself and would 'ave choked in seein' old Joey's tricks as they often 'ad to pat 'im on the back to bring 'is royal breath back not as Queen Charlotte would for she were that grand as she'd 'ave set there and see any one die afore she'd lift 'er finger. When I got to Pentinwill I 'eard Aunt say as old Joe were agoin' to retire and as she would go and see 'im once more and 'ear 'im say good bye, tho' in course it is a sorrowful word even in a clown's mouth, not but wot we must all part, yet that's no reason as we shouldn't be cheerful while we are here and try to do our duty by one another and that's 'ow it were Aunt took me to that Theatre as was the benefit of that dear old Joey as she did always call 'im and we got there werry early so as to get in, tho' we'd got tickets as he did wish to give us but Aunt wouldn't 'ave it cos as she said if it were for 'is benefit he did ought to benefit by it. I can't say whether he did or not but all as I can say, for I recollects 'it like last week and preaps better cos as you gets on you remember better wot 'appened years ago than yesterday, but all as I can say about it is as that there might be a benefit for 'im as wasn't much of a benefit for me, for I was pretty nigh squoze flat in gettin' in. The pantermine as begun with evil sperrits, as come up thro' the floor as looked werry orful made me shed tears atthinkin' of Nelly and no wonder that poor dear gal got 'er leg broke a runnin' a mucker as the sayin' is agin' sich infernal characters, as would 'ave set the place in flames but for the real water, as is no doubt why they as it always turned on. Then there were a old ooman come on as they called Mother goose, but Aunt said was old Joe. I didn't know 'im from Adam as the sayin' is but who'er he was he certainly danced and sung that wonderful for a old woman with a stick as made me stare, and didn't parties oller and roar when he pulled all 'is clothes off and come on as clown and then in course I knowed 'im as made me only think of poor Nelly; I'm sure if they 'ad all their ways in the theayter he wouldn't never 'ave retired at all, for they 'ad 'im in agin' and agin' partikler when he come on for to sing and make sich faces as made me larf not as I forgot Nelly. Well long afore the end come I was a lookin' at some lovely dancin' as was fairies all so bright and beautiful as Aunt said was to give that old clown a rest. So I says to myself I wonder if Nelly's as 'appy and beautiful as them fairies and all of a suddin one 'em come a dancin' forward and I screams out, Nelly, Nelly, dear Nelly, and I busts out a cryin'; as made every one look at me and

Aunt she quieted me and says be quiet that's a good gal you shall see 'er. I says, Oh! let me see 'er ag'in. I says I won't cry no more, but do let me see 'er ag'in. Hush says Aunt and then that Clown began his pranks, and a many said as he was a gettin' werry shaky in 'is legs some said as it were wonderful 'ow sich a old gentleman could dance about that lively, and he certainly did stop once or twice to take breath and he were partikler shakey at the end when he come on and Aunt said as she were sure as he'd break down altogether partikler when all them gals jest like that poor dear Nelly come up thro' traps where she 'ad broke 'er leg come round 'im and all them other parties in that pantermine, as seemed to look on 'im as a father and then old Joe come to say good bye, a good many took up 'is 'ands and kissed 'em. Oh! there was a shoutin', when he went off for ever, as is 'ard lines for Clowns as it is for them as likes to 'ave a good larf at 'em. When we got out I begun a sheddin' of tears and when Aunt asked me wot were the matter I couldn't 'elp a sayin' as I wanted to go back. But Aunt said as it were all over for to-night and asked me 'ow I liked it. I said as it were beautiful and she says didn't Nelly look nice. I says wot ever Nelly cos I couldn't 'ardly believe my senses as I'd really see 'er. Why she says your old friend. I says you don't mean 'er in the pink as were like a angel. Yes she says and you're to come and see 'er. I could have screamed with joy. So we did go round all at the back, of the place where they'd been a actin' and see that dear old Clown as give me a kiss, and then Nelly she come, so growd she 'ugged me when she'd got 'er pink frock off. As in course were 'nt dead and never 'ad been, but didn't live next door to Aunt no longer; and thought I'd been told as she 'ad been sent to Margit by that dear old Clown as 'ad set 'er leg all right, and she were 'nt a goin' on dancin' no more but were a goin' to a finishin' school thro' a uncle as 'ad come 'ome from sea with money and were 'nt goin' to be in the Theayter no more, and 'ad only done it for this once cos she begged and prayed to be let for this dear old soul of a Clown as 'ad been 'er friend when she had that fall and didn't wish 'er to stop now he was a goin', as is the reason as I've always been afeard of Theayters thro' 'earin' that old Clown say as they're dangerous places for young gals as aint careful, cos says he there's so many traps and pitfalls about as they may go down in a minit if not careful, but in course for them as looks where they're a goin' to a Theayter; as safe as a Chapel for that matter. Afore we went away that there dear old Clown made me 'ave a bit of cake and give Aunt a glass of wine as 'ad knowed 'im from a boy and told 'er as he should come and see 'er. Nelly's mother she was there and told Aunt wot a true friend that dear old man had been, and then they all shook hands with 'im once more and he give me a kiss and a shillin' and Nelly said as she'd come and see me and Aunt some fine day and so she did often till she married and went to forin parts. That old Clown he were dead beat and tired so we didn't stop long and 'is voice shook a good deal in sayin' good bye as no doubt is 'urtful to the feelins even for a Clown not but wot he was one of them as must 'ave 'ad 'is 'art in the right place for he couldn't not only make you larf but knowed 'ow to speak proper as said the words as he did used to when he come to see Nelly as I couldn't never forget as shows as them Clowns, tho' they do dance about and go on that way, may be more like ministers in their feelins and I aint often been to no Pantermine but shan't never not to my dyin' day forget the lesson as that Clown taught me in goodness and I only 'opes as all Clowns is like 'im and them Pantermine teaches as good lessons as pulpits.

THE SACK!

(A SONG FOR THE SEASON.)

I.

I HAVE injured my innards and scalded my throat,
With a number of drinks alcoholic,
And my pancreas suffers from lesions remote,
Whilst my spleen has become melancholic,
I've drunk fusil oil and thought it was good,
With the beer of the Belgians made merry;
But the crowning affront which my vitals have stood,
Was a glass of old What's-his-name's sherry.

II.

My coat is now shiny, my waistcoat is new,
And my trousers are properly mended;
Upon my left breast, by a ribbon of blue,
Is a large pewter medal suspended.
I play the tin whistle, and march down the street,
To the tune of "The Cure," and "Down Derry;"
In fact, I've become a Good Templar complete,
Through a glass of old What's-his-name's sherry.

III.

Oh! well I remember both Tietjens and Faure,
And the light-hearted youth Campanini;
I have screamed with delight, and have shouted "Encore!"
"Il Segreto! Trebelli-Bettini!"
When I thought how the Borgia had poisoned the lot,
Which the monks were in waiting to bury,
I fancied Lueretia the secret had got
Of old What's-his-name's favourite sherry.

WALTER MATTHEWS.

ESCAPE FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH.

By LORD WILLIAM PITT LENNOX.

ON Christmas Eve a joyous party were assembled at Manningford Castle, the seat of Sir Arthur Felton. Twilight had scarcely faded away, when the furious galloping of a horseman was suddenly heard, as he rapidly advanced upon the ancient avenue, that led by a gentle, though somewhat circuitous ascent to the castle gate. The sound startled a young and beautiful girl—"sole daughter of Sir Arthur's house and heart"—who was gazing intently at the portrait of her absent affianced lover. The deadly war in the Peninsula had taken him from her; but absence had increased her love. Hers was a pure, deep, ardent, and imperishable feeling; Alice Felton was the joy, the pride, the ambition of his fond heart, and never did saintly martyr dedicate himself with more intense devotion to his faith than did Charles Delaval consecrate his heart to her. But Alice, the once light-hearted girl, with sinking heart and tearful eyes, now bitterly, day-by-day, mourned her lover's absence. A letter from his colonel had conveyed to her the news that her soul's first and last idol had been missing after the battle of Vittoria.

Alice, on hearing the clatter of the horse's hoofs, had rushed to the window, where she saw a man in earnest conversation with her father. Fearing he might be the bearer of bad news, she remained motionless, and was only roused from her lethargy by the entrance of Sir Arthur, who exclaimed "All's well, Delaval will eat his Christmas dinner with us." This sudden change from black despair to radiant joy was too much for the

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ROSICRUCIAN, at 100gs.
PAGANINI, at 20gs.
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NOTICE.—TATTERSALL'S.—In consequence of CHRISTMAS DAY falling on a Monday there will be No Sale at ALBERT GATE on the 25th inst., and none till MONDAY, JANUARY 1st, 1876.

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SALES BY AUCTION EVERY MONDAY.
 Horses on view Saturday.

TO be SOLD by AUCTION, by Messrs. TATTERSALL, near Albert Gate, Hyde Park, on MONDAY, January 1st, the following HORSES, under Lord Exeter's conditions, the property of a gentleman.
 1. VERVAIN, 5 yrs.
 2. ERMENGARDE, 3 yrs.
 3. QUEEN OF SPADES, 2 yrs.
 4. CHESTNUT FILLY by Miner out of Lady of Coverdale, 2 yrs.
 5. KING OF SPADES, 2 yrs. This colt to remain with Mr. W. H. Manser, trainer, till after Doncaster St. Leger, 1877.
 6. CITRONELLA; covered by General Peel.
 7. LEOVILLE; covered by Thunderbolt.

TO be SOLD by AUCTION by Messrs. TATTERSALL, near Albert Gate, Hyde Park, on MONDAY, December 18th, the property of a Gentleman.
ST. AGNES, Brown Filly by St. Albans out of Sister to General Peel, 3 yrs; in training and fit to run

FOR PRIVATE SALE at OLD OAK FARM, SHEPHERD'S BUSH.
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The above horse is the sire of Daydream, winner of the Great Eastern Railway Handicap in 1873, &c., &c.
LORD KEITH, brown horse by Keith (son of Blair Athol) out of Blanchette (Newry's dam) by The Baron, 3 yrs; valuable as a stallion.

MARS (foaled in 1869), bay horse (brother to Idus by Wild Dayrell out of Freight by John o'Gaunt; with good action, covered last season in Yorkshire.
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 W. and S. FREEMAN, Proprietors.

CHRISTMAS DAY.—NOTICE.—Christmas Day falling on a Monday, with the Bank Holiday and Boxing Day following, there will be NO SALE at ALDRIDGE'S on WEDNESDAY, December 27, 1876. Accounts due on the Monday will be payable on Thursday, December 28, when horses will also be received for the sale on Saturday.
 By order,
 W. and S. FREEMAN, Proprietors.

ALDRIDGE'S, St. Martin's-lane.—GREYHOUNDS.—On SATURDAY, Dec. 16, will be SOLD by PUBLIC AUCTION, late the property of Mr. Hole, of Knowle House, near Dunster, deceased, the kennel of valuable GREYHOUNDS. Catalogues at Aldridge's.
 W. and S. FREEMAN, Proprietors.

ALDRIDGE'S, St. Martin's-lane.—Alderney and Guernsey Cows and Heifers.—On SATURDAY, Dec. 16, will be SOLD by PUBLIC AUCTION, the property of Mr. L. P. Fowler, of Little Bushey Farm, FIFTEEN purely-bred ALDERNEY and GUERNSEY COWS and HEIFERS, mostly with calves by their sides, and in splendid milking condition for Christmas. On view Thursday, Dec. 14.
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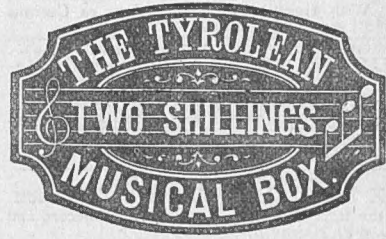
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